

REVELATIONS OF
ZODIACAL SIGNS
and
LUNAR MANSIONS

A SEQUEL TO MYTHS AND SYMBOLS OF **VEDIC** ASTROLOGY

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An Overview:

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Rajasic Attribute:

ARIES: ASHWINI, BHARANI, KRITTIKA(1st part)

TAURUS:KRITTIKA(2nd part), ROHINI, MRIGASHIRA(1st part)

GEMINI: MRIGASHIRA(2nd part), ARDRA, PUNARVASU(1st part)

CANCER: PUNARVASU(2nd part), PUSHYA, ASHLESHA

Tamasic attribute:

LEO: MAGHA,PURVA PHALGUNI,UTTARA PHALGUNI(1st part)

VIRGO: UTTARA PHALGUNI(2nd part), HASTA, CHITRA(1st part)

LIBRA: CHITRA(2nd part), SWATI, VISHAKHA(1st part)

SCORPIO: VISHAKHA(2nd part), ANURADHA, JYESTHA

Sattwic attribute:

SAGITTARIUS: MOOLA, PURVA ASHADA, UTTARA ASHADA(1st part)

CAPRICORNUS: UTTARA ASHADA(2nd part), SHRAVANA, DHANISTHA(1st part)

AQUARIUS: DHANISTHA(2nd part), SATBHISAK, PURVA BHADRAPADA(1st part)

PISCES: PURVA BHADRAPADA(2nd part), UTTARA BHADRAPAPA,REVATI

PROLOGUE

The basic material for this study was prepared and presented for the first time at the Fifth International Symposium of the American Council of Vedic Astrology especially at its Post-Seminar Intensive on the subject at San Diego and was subsequently presented at a Workshop on Nakshatras at Seattle organized by the Washington State Astrological Association. Dennis Flaherty, the president of the Association and Paul H. Luke of Chicago offered to arrange for its suitable publication and kept the manuscript for a fairly long period but they could not do anything about it due to several unforeseen circumstances. Meanwhile popularity of the tapes on the subject began reaching the author. Many Speakers in different parts of the world began talking about the significance of Lunar Mansions. Soon afterwards Dr. Dennis Harness, Director of the Institute of Vedic Astrology, Sedona, and Vice-President of the American Council of Vedic Astrology published a brilliant introductory book on Lunar Mansions. It greatly whetted the interest of astrologers. It was particularly so because the international popularity of Vedic Astrology has recently been growing very fast. But without a good grasp of the significance of Nakshatras the finer points of Vedic Astrology cannot be well appreciated. The present author therefore thought it useful to ready the available material with him in a book form bringing out the Scriptural and religious Support for the Lunar Mansions so that meaningful deeper implications of predictive Vedic astrology could be worked out on its foundation.

The primary purpose of this publication is to show the link between astrology and the life-process. It also suggests that the significance of happy and unhappy events should be understood at their deeper levels and one should try to cooperate with nature rather than try to avoid the afflictions and seek remedial measures. Any one trying to carry out studies on this subject further, (because this task is enormous and much beyond the capacity of the present author) the author would try to support such studies to his full measure. Meanwhile the present author humbly seeks readers' indulgence for the various limitations of this study.

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There is a close relationship between the zodiacal signs and the fixed stars. This relationship is often overlooked by many modern astrologers who consider them as two separate Systems of astrological predictions arising from two disparate sources but they forget that the planetary rulership of different asterisms provides the basis for the cyclic sequence of planetary rulership over different periods in an individual's life which determined what is known as Dasa and Mahadasa System in Hindu (or Vedic) astrology. This is so while every quarter of the asterism is ruled by planets owning different signs of the zodiac in the same sequence as the zodiacal signs. These associations are fundamental in Vedic predictive astrology. At the same time, the sequence of the signs and the asterisms along with the various Vedic deities associated with them in different (world) scriptures indicated universality of the knowledge of these stellar Impulses and their importance in the evolutionary growth of mankind. The characteristics of these impulses are still hidden in many mystic references. In order to establish the significance of astrology in guiding one's everyday life and relating everyday occurrences with one's permanent goal, it is important to unravel these mysteries. It has been the universal practice of occultists all over the world since time immemorial to reveal the keys to these secrets only to the selected few. During recent times, Professor Jung deprecated the modern tendency of minimizing the importance of such wisdom even if the same is less intelligible to the modern mind. He stated that "we are fond of putting 'Oriental Wisdom' in quotation marks and banishing it to the dim region of faith and superstition. But that is wholly to misunderstand the realism of the East". In his monumental work entitled *Psychology and Alchemy*, he has shown the significance of various astrological factors and symbols used by the alchemists of the past and has even quoted such references indicating that the idea of an ascent through the seven spheres of the planet symbolizes the return of the soul to the sun-god from whom it originated", and "Saturn eating his children having been sprinkled Mercurial water" contained much more inner wisdom than they appear superficially. The actual content of the mystic teachings of the old, according to him, is brought to the individual during the course of his dreams, which intone to him the message of his central core of the soul. He even mentioned that "we are told that a man can receive the secret knowledge only through divine Inspiration or from the Ups of a Master, and also that no one can complete 'the work except with the help of God". These remarks amply emphasize the need for trying to decipher the mystic teachings of the ancient seers whether through the lips of a master, during the placid darkness of the dream State or through hints and suggestions available through various scriptures and other sources on the subject.

H.P. Blavatsky has drawn our attention to another aspect of stellar impulses. She indicated that the history of the universe and the course of human evolution are enshrined in the zodiacs and the asterisms. By proper understanding of the nature and Operation of the signs, asterisms, planets and the stars it is possible to decipher the past history of mankind as well as obtain an insight into the future of mankind. Each soul evolves on its specific ray yet there is a general pattern, which indicates possible stages in its inner unfoldment. The impact of the stellar radiation for the human race and each individual constituting it can be known through the guidance of Initiates, seers and yogis: but the basic understanding of symbols and of the apocalyptic hymns of the Archaic Records can be obtained only with the knowledge of the sevenfold keys of astrological mysteries. They require development of intuition, insight and Instructions (Initiation) in sacred Mystic Schools for which one has to undergo severe austerities. On the basis of these keys it is possible to interpret the message of the stars. These interpretations of physical, psychological and metaphysical evolutionary impulses at different levels of human existence and cosmic manifestation can certainly be a guide to human conduct and relationships. But such keys are not usually available to common students, so one has to try to get some insight through the religious scriptures and esoteric astrological texts and try to interpret the available teachings through the eye of intuition and to have the grandiosic vision of one's egoic splendor and ultimate mission. Many of the conclusions thus reached could be far from real inner knowledge, yet they could show the immediate horizon and the possibilities available for each individual. It is possible that the messages conveyed by the Alchemists through their mystic symbols in revealing the psychological complexities of an evolving individual could probably be better comprehended in modern times by a careful discernment of astrological myths and symbols.

THE LUMINARIES

The Sun and the Moon carry out their Operations according to the divine plan for the man; it is the archetype or the ultimate destiny for the individual in the Divine Mind that these luminaries imprint incessantly through their impact on the evolving egos to guide them to their goal. In fulfilling their mission, the luminaries depend greatly on the assistance available through the zodiacs, asterisms, planets and the stars. Their movement is confined within the Ecliptic; the Sun never shines vertically beyond the Tropics. Areas of the globe falling within the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn receive direct solar radiation, which reflecting through the zodiac and the asterisms produced the necessary impact. But the occult literature mentions of the movement of Poles in such a way that over a period of time there is an interchange between the positions of North and South poles. It implied that the Poles for certain duration were within the ecliptic. As a result, the solar radiation was directly at those regions, which is presently considered as the Polar Regions. Such movements and adaptations of the stellar forces produced several seismic, geological and other changes, which led to alterations in continental contours. They also produced changes in racial evolution as well as maturity of several Principles in human beings. The incessant growth and development of spiritual nature of different egos and the unending possibilities of inner unfoldment become possible as a result of such changes in the relationships between the stars, ecliptic and the terrestrial movements. During these changes, the solar radiation gradually and incessantly articulates the divine destiny for each particle that sometime or the other manifests on this globe. Professor Carl Jung quoted Michael Maier, an Alchemist as saying that "the sun, by its many millions of revolutions, spins the gold into the earth. Little by little the sun has imprinted its image on the earth, and that image is the gold. The sun is the image of God, the heart is the sun's image in man, just as gold is the sun's image on the earth and God is known in the gold"¹. As a result of this spinning the web of solar impressions the destiny of each particle is identified by the sun and as Nietzsche would say, the image, which slumbers in the stone, is breathed out by it. The real task of working out this image is performed by the Moon which mirrors the image concealed in the Solar Logos and makes it possible for the egos to attain their destiny. In the Performance of this task the Moon is assisted by the agency of the asterisms. The close relationship between the Moon and the asterisms is allegorized in Hindu Puranic stories by their marriage.

The impact of Moon is felt in periodicity of manifestation and adherence to septenary principle in Nature. But there are certain well led guidelines for manifestation, which are universally and very closely followed. These guidelines are reflected in the Theory of Numbers, in the psychological evolution of human individual as well as in the stellar and zodiacal impulsions guiding the egoic unfoldment. The application of this guideline in the realm of psychological transformation was mentioned by Maria Prophetissa whom Professor Jung quoted while stating "with this Statement, which may strike the reader as peculiar, we come to one of the central axioms of Alchemy, namely the saying of Mari Prophetissa: "One becomes two, two becomes three and out of the third comes the one as the fourth"². A similar opinion was expressed by H.P. Blavatsky who stated that "we see the figures 1,3,5,7 as perfect, because thoroughly mystic, numbers play a prominent part in every cosmogony and evolution of living beings". She also stated that in China, 1,3,5,7 were called 'celestial numbers' in the canonical "Book of Change"—Yi king or transformation, as in "evolution". The explanation of the importance of these numbers becomes easy to understand when we begin to examine the import of these numbers. Number one (1) is a mystic number; it is the first emanation from the noumenon. One appears out of nothing and Stands erect. It Stands for self-contained unity, purity, innocence and integrated wholeness. One symbolized harmony, order and the essential reservoir from which every other number, form and life can be manifested: every number subsequently expressed contains within it the nature of one. Two is not included in the category of perfect numbers or the celestial numbers because it is essentially the shadow of number One; wherever One exists, it inevitably assumes the existence of not-One, its counterpart which together with One makes for Two (2). Two by itself has no creative quality but it is a negation of 1, that which is not 1. In the realm of manifestation, the number two symbolized a contrary idea. The science of good and bad began with it. "All that is double, false opposed to the only reality, was depicted by the binary. It also expressed the contrasts in nature which are always double: night and day, light and darkness, cold and heat, dampness and dryness, health and sickness, error and truth, male and female and so on". In manifestation, in fact, by its very negation of the number One it provides the basic material, which functions as the force, which arouses creative faculties of 1 and thereby leads it to creative activities. In spite of ever togetherness of 1 and 2, they are ineffective, two lines can never enclose any Space. They however, arouse the quality of attraction and repulsion, the power of electricity and magnetism as well as the urge to unite and procreate. Resulting from these two numbers, there arises three (3), which is capable of manifesting the subjectivity into

physical forms. A triangle is considered as the primeval quality of objective manifestation. It is held in great honor in every nation.

In geometry a straight line cannot represent an absolute figure, any more than two straight lines. Three straight lines produce by their junction a triangle, which is the first perfect figure; it is capable of enclosing an area. It symbolized the pattern of all forms of manifestation. The asterisms are very closely synchronised with this pattern. During the course of their cyclic growth when the different egos move from one stage of self-unfoldment, the continuity of their inner consciousness being maintained through the law of reincarnation, they move from one asterism to another gradually closely following this manifestative pattern. The entire chain of zodiacal signs and the asterisms have the broad polarisation between two groups, the first half primarily concerned with immersion of the egos in gradually deeper layers of materialism with thicker veils of matter and delusion till they reach the deepest point in Swati asterism after which the inner urge for release from terrestrial attractions begins to intensify and the ego moves to the path of evolution wherein it gradually tries to shed of some of its delusion and to attain one's pristine nature. Libra is the stage where the zodiacal impulse provides greatest immersion in matter with heightened involutionary impulse, but at this level the urge to attain one's pristine nature also begins to sprout. At this stage, the individuals are surrounded by material affluence but psychological dissatisfaction is also present with every fulfillment of their desire.

During the evolutionary phase, both the zodiacal signs and the various asterisms make the life of an individual from the common worldly standpoint sorrowful and full of conflicts nonetheless his understanding of the life-process deepens and he gradually extricates his inner life from external conditions, he gradually cuts himself off from the golden web woven by the solar radiation.

TRIPLICATION AND CREATIVITY

The impact of triplication in the pattern of manifestation is represented by Number three (3) It is shown by dividing the asterisms and the signs in three categories of Rajas (activity), Tamas (inertia or sloth) and Sattwa (harmony or righteousness). The first four signs namely Aries, Taurus, Gemini and Cancer belong to Rajasic group. These signs operate primarily at the subjective level. They are represented by the first four numerals: 1,2,3,and 4. Aries is the unborn divine spark ready to embark upon the egoic pilgrimage of self-realization at higher than the previous level of evolution. Psychologically, its impulsion has the chief characteristic of independence, energy and innocence. Taurus symbolized the number (2). It has the unique feature of passivity, femininity and always seeking some kind of shelter although it always seeks to express and impress its strength, power. Whereas Aries strives to act and produce results, Taurus seeks pleasure, convenience and self-satisfaction. It represents creative potential but by itself it is ineffective in making mark on the external world. Gemini is the third sign of the zodiac, which markedly manifests the qualities of triplication: it provides initiative for union with matter and thereby experiences the result of such immersion. The duality of spirit and matter constituting human individuals at this level begins to manifest its result. Astrologically, it represents an important base of the Triangle of Materiality; psychologically, it shows the two sides of man, his male and female characteristics, and from the experiences thus gained, he develops his intellectual nature whereby he could evaluate the importance of his various sense perceptions. With this intellect, he comprehends the entire universe, he can fathom the deepest secrets and comprehend the nobility of highest spirituality, with this intellect he is able to contain the entire manifestation within his subjectivity. Cancer represents the great deep, the bythos, described in Hindu scriptures as Hiranyagarbha from which all creative possibilities emerge, even Brahma, the divine Creator, at one stage of manifestation is said to be born from the s Golden Egg. Cancer is the great matrix in which the individual explores his inner self. During these four zodiacal signs, the divine spark is still in its subjectivity in spite of the fact that it has been actively endeavoring to penetrate the deeper layers of materiality and to gain various experiences; during the course of these signs, it has established itself within a framework that is conducive for his material experiences and knowledge thereof.

RAJASIC IMPULSES

This section of Rajasic impulses includes first nine asterisms which acting on the consciousness aspect of the manifesting ego lead it to a Situation where it could understand the significance of material existence and its limiting nature. This realization induces it to withdraw itself from the web of Mayavic creation. Ashwini, the first asterism, stands for rejuvenation, resurrection and attainment of divine position as a result of its own creative power. It represented the inward turned subjective state of consciousness, which energised 'the Germ that dwelled in darkness'. Bharani, the second asterism, represented the same consciousness when it was outward turned and envisioned the evolutionary design of the universe of sensuous experiences. It is the immaculate Mother from whom proceeded all the gods—the anthropomorphized creative forces. The differences between these two asterisms, which still operated in the realm of subjectivity, characterized their contrariety. Krittika, the third asterism represents the highly explosive, greatly surcharged, cosmic electricity which produced thunder and lightning during its descent to denser layers of Mulaprakriti or the abstract deific feminine principle. It releases the mystic principle of sound called Naada. It has the infinite potentiality for producing vibrations of infinite variety in any intensity or amount. The solar flare is carried by Krittika to various entities in the form of energy scintillating through their sinews. Their fluidity is stabilized by Rohini, the fourth asterism. Rohini is the counterpart of Krittika: the divine electricity pervading all forms of existence requires some Converter, which could transform the potential into actuality. Rohini performs this task. This asterism is completely within Taurus and operates to fulfil the task assigned to this sign. It preserves the potential. The close association between Rohini and Moon resulted in Moon acting as an accoucheur in regenerating life on earth and energizing the manifestative process. The asterism at this stage imparts certain special qualities to the egoic consciousness so as to smoothen the process of its self-unfolding and self-awareness. Rohini nourishes and protects the plastic nature of ego but its inner nature is still contained within itself. The fifth asterism namely Mrigashirsa takes the objectifying ego to the stage where its inner urges could find expression. Gemini, the third sign with capacity to articulate its inner impulsions leads involution egos to experience. Rohini inculcated the capacity to experience sensations, while Mrigashirsa expresses the inner instincts. It enabled the subjective urges to articulate itself into physical experiences. At this stage the egos developed self-centeredness. It produced the duality in human nature; it aroused the selectivity, the likes and dislikes, the capacity to calculate what was important for its self-preservation.

The impulse of Tejas, the energy vibrating through every atom of manifestation, so far under the impact of Rajasic Attribute leading to important egoic transformations receives accelerated momentum under Ardra, the sixth asterism. It lies completely within Gemini and intensifies its nature to a great extent. The formation of nucleus of self-centeredness under Mrigashirsa leads the egos at the Ardra stage to the inevitable mental conflict, intellectual turbulence and immensity of insecurity. Ardra represented such twists and turns which are necessary for transforming racial psyche, group consciousness and security of divine support into self-centred psychological nature of the individual with its concomitant complexities, agitation, churning of emotions and the emergence of a new understanding of one's existence and its problems. Ardra leads to self-created problems arising from one's activities, reactions, calculations and self-seeking impulses in which process the ego develops new understanding, new ambitions, and new thirst for fresh sensations. It so much *bouleverses* the psychological framework of the being, that it is thoroughly pulverized for a complete renewal of its life-essence which occurs under the following asterism namely Punarvasu, the seventh asterism. Punarvasu leads to the reawakening of the vision of one's pristine nature. It so happens because the asterism links the triangularity of Gemini and quaternary nature of Cancer; it joins the pure intelligence descending from superconscious and its material receptacle. Punarvasu is a Channel of deep-acting impulses; it arouses pure consciousness, produces the luminous mind and makes the ego aware of its physical limitations. This Situation inspires the individual to strive to regain his pristine nature, the divine spark embedded in his physical casement. Under its impulsion there is phenomenal expansion of one's consciousness as well as the restlessness at one's entire being, the ego enters the realm of Cancer where it finds the immensity of the matrix within which it has to operate in order to regain its imprisoned splendor.

Pushya releases tremendous creative energy and transports the ego to the acme of its physical and mental accomplishment. The descent of superconscious is so overwhelming as to prepare the ego to trample over all restrictions impeding its assimilation in the universal spirit. At this stage, the physical limitations to inner urges hindering the expression of the latent spirit bring forth the best in the

individual. The asterism leads to the blossoming of the highest and the noblest aspiration in man and makes him convinced of his power to attain the same. The limitations of physical existence however, lead to disappointment and frustrations. There is swing at this stage between the aspiration to accomplish the highest and the failure caused by the weaknesses of the instrumentality to attain the same. The swing between the two extremes produces a sense of despondency. Pushya leads to an unusual kind of disillusionment and disappointment from the given conditions of existence. It induces the individual to seek further insight into the process of manifestation, the laws of perfection and the soundness or otherwise of one's physical and worldly attainments. This frustration pushes the ego to greater depths of manifestation and to seek deeper understanding of life and its expressions. The ninth asterism namely, Ashlesha provides the necessary wisdom which also concludes the primary impulses of Rajasic Attributes.

Ashlesha generates many mysterious impulses. It concludes the Rajasic impulses and ushers the egos to the next phase of Tamasic forces under which they have to struggle and retrieve the power to regain their primeval nature. The stupendous importance of Ashlesha arises from its relationship with the dawn of wisdom and the vision of the path of return. Ashlesha illumines the mind, awakens wisdom and in the momentary flash all the principles are unified and the human being is individualized at that moment. The ego is no more a gregarious entity. The individuality leads to immense sorrow, intense loneliness, heightened sensitivity, and formidable responsibilities towards the retrieval of one's primeval nature. Ashlesha leads to the fount of wisdom, but the lower mind representing the intellect aroused under Gemini with its elusive power to veil the Truth produces innumerable difficulties which have to be removed at the physical levels constituted by the (lower) quaternary. It cannot be rend by wisdom alone. This creates the greatest disappointment for Ashlesha; this impulse abhors action and delights in the realm of higher consciousness. The manifestation of wisdom is the very antithesis of personalized egoic consciousness but both of these are inevitably present at the Ashlesha stage. The upsurge of subterranean current of wisdom descending from the superconscient unsettles the psycho-mental structure of the ego. The dawn of wisdom gives powerful thrust to destroy the veil of ignorance, egotism and delusion but the past karmic forces giving sustenance to these veils make the life of the individual miserable. This is the milieu under which Ashlesha leaves the ego to fight its own battles through the following Tamasic period of egoic pilgrimage.

TAMASIC IMPULSES

The second side of the Triplicity of manifestation represented by Tamasic impulses begins with Magha and ends with Jyestha, the tenth and eighteenth asterisms respectively. During this phase, the ego sinks deeper in materialism in the process of fathoming the depth of matter and the nature of its influence on one's inner divinity but experiences gained through these sensual involvements finally begin to release its latent faculties. By the time the ego has completed its journey through the realm of Matter and has traversed the vale of shadow, it is sufficiently prepared to commence its journey towards its ultimate destination. The complexities of the second phase have considerably increased because it is during this phase that most of the human beings live their everyday life. In their usual relationships with the world around them, they get their lessons in many ways, which cannot be easily classified in a few categories. This problem is further accentuated when we examine the four zodiacal signs comprising these asterisms. In spite of such difficulties, the four signs namely, Leo, Virgo, Libra and Scorpio very succinctly describe the problems confronting them and the special lessons they have to learn from them.

The ego enters Leo strongly entrenched in egotism, Spiritual ignorance and with exaggerated pride of its physical form. The veil of matter is quite thick and self-centeredness very acute. The voice of wisdom aroused under the influence of the Nagas during its (ego's) journey in Cancer is little heard under such veils. The self-centeredness aroused under Leo is so intense that the faint inner voice is seldom recognized. The identification of egoic consciousness with its outer sheaths is very strong. It makes the individual feel that he is the most important person in the world; there is nothing beyond him, and in every aspect of life he is the best. But the karmic forces generated during his existence as a member of the group begin to create insurmountable difficulties in his everyday life. At the same time the inner voice of wisdom constantly intones its messages. The assertion of the inner-self getting confused with the promptings of the sheaths makes the ego feel frustrated when it meets the karmic impediments. The egotism in man with vague promptings from inside however, encourages the individual to push forward in material layers to get direct experience and realize the Truth, if there is any, by himself. In this way the Leo impulse prepares the ego to proceed further to explore the realities of the material existence.

Virgo represents reactions-to egoic aggressive actions under the Leonine impulse. It stirs up the past ego-centric karmic forces so as to resolve them and to remove all Rajasic impurities from consciousness. By removing the impurities of the sheaths and enabling the superconscious to descend to the conscient, it opens the floodgates of latent faculties and provides much encouragement to delve deeper in material existence surrounding the individual. At the Virgo stage, the individual receives much physical sustenance, tremendous responsibilities whereby one develops one's latent faculties, and also subconscious hints and suggestions of non-physical reality. The egoic-unfoldment of the individual is characterized by three main features namely, introspective attitude, confidence in oneself and an inner urge to explore deeper. The material surroundings and the inner fire glowing incessantly make the individual experience new realities about himself and the world around him, which imperceptibly induces him to move forward.

At Libra, the ego is confronted with one of the most powerful conditions wherein the inner voice against the outer ring of limitations is deep and powerful but the temptations of sense-enjoyment are also not any less. Which aspect of the individual's life would over-power him is generally difficult to determine. Both aspects of manifestation namely spirit and matter importantly impinge upon his consciousness. His thought process is activated, his sensitivity is heightened, and his understanding of life as such deepens. The difficult conditions through which the individual is made to pass at Libra and the struggles he has to undergo push him towards spiritual enlightenment. Libra makes the individual realize his ultimate destiny the harder way but provides him sufficient allurements to work for it. When he is prepared to face the inner reality and to suffer deprivations and austerities for the same, he is ready to enter the zone of Scorpio where he accomplishes occult attainments and receives knowledge about the hidden mysteries in Nature.

Scorpio is the seat of highly mystic power. Two distinct currents of influences from this sign impinge on the individual. The first one makes the individual immersed in materiality intensifying the pleasures and attractions of sense-enjoyment. Under its impact the individual becomes anti-social, perverse, having unethical liaison; such individuals are often found engaged in drug trafficking, gambling dens

and in black-marketing. The other Channel of impulses leads to the arousal of intense urge for spiritual awakening and for undertaking severe penance; such individuals begin preparations for entry into secret occult schools and to qualify for "Initiations" in them. Both these Channels of influence would finally make the individual much disillusioned with the seeming attractions of material attachments, which in fact lead one to sorrows and falsehood. With this understanding, there is tremendous explosion in consciousness. It gives insight in the inherent divinity of man. Scorpio is important for its opening the door of the cavity of the heart where dwells the Inner Ruler Immortal. With it comes the vision of Delight, Puissance and Illumination. Once this realization dawns on the ego, nothing can stop it from marching ahead towards the attainment of its final destiny, which is unification with its primeval nature and thereby regaining its pristine innocence.

The four signs of the zodiac generating the Tamasic Attributes provide during the course of their impulsion sufficient impetus to the egos for them to try to retrieve their inner nature from the external sheaths and thereby to proceed on their pilgrimage to self-fulfillment with full knowledge of the path and with confidence. The nine asterisms constituting the second phase of egoic-unfoldment support these signs by impressing the consciousness of the individual in such a manner that the general goals set out for the different zodiacal signs are effectively accomplished. Leo comprised Magna, Purva Phalguni and Uttara Phalguni's first quarter. At Magha the individual is confronted with his past karmic forces and he has to grapple with them. He gains confidence during his struggle to overcome the restricting influences of his adverse and discordant actions. The self is important at this stage; there is intense thirst for personal experience and greater delight in personal achievements. With every fresh experience, the thinking process is also intensified. Intense activity and much serious mentation are two features, which gradually involve the ego in greater material involvement. The forces of the past actions by their momentum push the ego farther in materiality.

Purva Phalguni accentuates the pleasure principle in life; it arises from greater egoic immersion in material surroundings and involvement in sensuous delight. The sensuous temperament of the individual is more concerned with his creative activities or his actions and efforts for attaining certain results rather than in the result itself. This asterism induces the ego to delve deeper, explore its surroundings, examine and analyze the significance of various experiences and proceed further in pursuit of its pleasure and happiness.

Uttara Phalguni is an extension of the previous impulse but here the desire to transcend the thralldom of materiality is more intense. The stellar impulses are so powerful and the strain of physical activities so acute that there is often a whirlwind in the mind. Such individuals are never satisfied with their existing conditions. Their ambition is very high and inner upsurge so powerful that they enter the region of Virgo with a gusto. In their reckless enthusiasm when they are haunted by dangers and difficulties, divine beneficence often comes to their rescue and they are miraculously saved and guided on to their journey. In the process, they develop considerable self-confidence and hope that they would never be lost.

The development of self-confidence however, accentuates their egotism to such an extent that they become arrogant while entering the Hastha asterism. Hastha accentuates intellect but I-ness of the individual is so much exaggerated that self-realization eludes him. The responsibilities of mundane existence and various socio-family involvements so much overburden the individual that his highly activated mental framework often verges to its breaking point but the inner spirit and divine guidance provide the necessary fortitude which helps him to maintain himself. It also developed faith in oneself and assurance in one's own power to transcend difficulties. An outcome of this Situation is that the personality begins to assert itself, which helps the individual to regulate and control his inertial instinctive impulses. The individual acquires several accomplishments, siddhis, whereby he succeeds in subjugating the darker forces on the way and reduces the influence of his material sheaths.

Chitra lies only half within Virgo and as such its impulses are partially regulated by the overall Virgo impact. Virgo does not dismantle materiality but it begins to fan the spiritual fire burning within the individual to flare up. Chitra produces conditions, which makes the ego look to its final destiny. It induces the ego to get an insight into its archetype. The various difficulties and frustrations that arise at this stage are intended to shatter the thick layer of delusion caused by exaggerated notion about oneself. The dawn of realism leads the individual to recognize the immensity of the universe and the spiritual nature of his own inner self. The psychological transformation at this stage prepares him to adopt himself to existing surrounding and within his karmic limitations. With this understanding the

individual enters Libra. During the early phase of Libra, realizing that the pure pearl of his individuality lies inside and profoundly hidden by the thick veil of materiality which cannot be broken all at once, he is prepared to work patiently for it. With such a transformation, Chittra spreading itself between Virgo and Libra raises the egoic consciousness to the level of perception of the facts of universal life. Chittra churns the consciousness, illumines the mind, gives vision of the ultimate destiny and differentiates the lower quaternary in its different constituents in order to adapt itself to experience directly the various levels of Truth.

The veil of materiality is so thick at Libra that the egos entering it from Chittra are unable to maintain the sad serenity aroused under that asterism. The self-confidence gained by the ego and the vision of immensity of the universe aroused the self-centeredness in it at a higher level. Swati, which spreads over the middle portion of Libra, arouses intense self-centeredness and thirst for sensuous delight. The individual is motivated by the desire to maximize his gain, derive the utmost conveniences of life, possess greatest power and the highest prestige, and make the world bend to his whims and caprice. The ego operating under Swati is unmindful of the harm it might cause to others during the course of its pursuit of pleasure and self-glorification. In spite of such materiality, Swati does not bestow contentment; there is always the feeling of missing something. The undercurrent of discontent finally prepares the ego for the difficult fight it has to undertake to overcome the onslaughts of illusion. Under Swati, the animal passion is ultimately guided by the illumined mind, which qualifies the ego to retrieve its divinity and be guided by one's inner light.

Visakha prepares the ego for its ultimate goal by destroying its materiality before it could venture to enter into the realm of spirituality. The asterism destroys the three main bases of materiality namely egotism, delusion and pride of the self but it is a very painful process. Only after elimination of these shortcomings, seer-will, strong determination and the aspiration to merge in the universal consciousness could be produced. Towards the conclusion of Vishakha, the ego develops the sense of righteousness arising from the various trials and tribulations, conflicts and strains undergone during this phase. At this phase of egoic development, the centre of consciousness shifts from physical to spiritual, from animal passions to divine union, from sense-gratification to merging into universal consciousness. The I-ness of the individual, which characterized the Tamasic attributes begins to recognise the reality of the Supreme Self, the Absolute All. It gives a new orientation to one's looking at the world events, a new understanding of one's purpose in life and one's responsibilities.

Visakha extends into Scorpio with its last quarter and under that impulsion it ushers a highly strong individual to his new Situation.

When Anuradha takes over the individual under its influence, it precipitates churning of his astro-mental nature and there is whirlwind in his mind. He is often tested for his moral fibre; his self-centredness often peeps out and he has to maintain constant vigil lest he might relapse to his old egotism. The struggle endured during this phase generates the power of vastness, intensity, endurance and infinitude. But at every step the individual would be tested against his past proclivities; it may therefore occasionally bestow much material gifts before the experience of the Eternal Night from which would arise the power of immortality and the inspiration to move towards ultimate delight. Only such experiences would loosen the shackles of materialism and terrestrial attraction. Anuradha is that spiritual impetus which stirs the Sediments of past karmic accumulations in such a manner that it produces turmoil, frustration and sorrow so as to enable the ego to have a vision of love, joy and harmony which could bestow many valuable gifts to sustain itself during its forthcoming phase of purification and spiritualisation.

Jyestha concludes the Tamasic phase of egoic unfoldment and prepares it to undertake the Sattwic or the third phase of the evolutionary development. Jyestha imparts intelligence, awareness of one's own real nature and Information about the twists and turns of the spiritual path, and it also operates like a bridge wherefrom the ego enters the terrain of Truth and Harmony. In spite of the remaining vestiges which the ego gradually casts away, Jyestha makes it stable and firm in its new understanding for he has seen the Light and has had the glimpse of his divine nature. He does not any longer suffer the illusory obscurities. His vision is now clear and he has recognized his goal. At Jyestha the seer-will, which is necessary for persevering under the strain of Sattwic impulsion, is developed. With such accomplishments the ego is now ushered in the next phase of evolution, which completes the Sattwic Attributes triplication of the manifestative process.

Sattwic attributes, which finally lead to enlightenment, self-awareness and realization of one's pristine nature, primarily work through four zodiacal signs namely Sagittarius, Capricorns, Aquarius and Pisces. They include the last nine asterisms from Moolam, the 19th asterism, to Revati the 27th asterism. This portion of the cyclic manifestation is greatly veiled with many blinds; whatever one can decipher from several occult traditions and esoteric writings only vaguely reveals the intense training of the disciple who aspires to knock at the door of secret knowledge. Even the various symbols and mythologies related with them are not very susceptible to easy Interpretation. Nonetheless, the astrological information about them enables the Student to obtain an intuitive understanding of the ordeals at the last phase of egoic unfoldment. Often one finds that the auspicious results indicated in astrological texts do not agree with actual experiences of the persons undergoing these periods. Such cases arise because the troublesome events occurring under the stellar impulses during this phase are meant to produce such psychological transformations which ultimately lead to the opening of the inner eye. These impulses work directly at the inner psyche. It makes the process highly painful and frustrating, but they arouse an insight into the evolutionary process of life. It is for such reasons that the occult literature emphatically affirmed, "Before the soul can stand in the, presence of the Holy Masters, its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart". In Hindu scriptures there are many instances of gods appearing in various guises to test the moral fibre of the disciples. They often made them to sacrifice their most beloved objects to prove their fidelity to their vows before the gods revealed their real identity. In ancient Mysteries, there was the tradition of testing the neophytes on probation before they were permitted entrance to the Mysteries. The process still continues but the method has changed. The stellar influences reveal to some extent the testings that the individuals have to undergo at different levels of their inner unfoldment.

Sagittarius is described as possessing dazzling radiance, and fiery dement, belonging to the warrior caste and holding a bow and wandering on the earth. Excepting the last, all other attributes of Sagittarius are in fact merely outer expressions of its central core allegorized in the symbol. Holding a bow and wandering on earth are indicative of its terrestrial battle and powerful engagement in exploration of secret powers of Nature contained both in man and his surroundings. Jyestha gave an insight in such powers and Sagittarius engaged the ego in retrieving them. As support measure it induced the individual to control his involuntary reflexes and practice austere discipline. Generally, this stage is described as the phase of discipleship. Capricorn marked the finale of this phase when the disciple realized the nature of harmony pervading the cosmos and he wanted now to be a part of it. He tries to give up his personal considerations and begins to work for the universal welfare. His life is organized under this idea of cosmic harmony with which he wants to associate himself. So under Capricornus he is brought in closer relationship with the Occult Hierarchy. It expands his consciousness enormously. His individuality takes charge of his personality. All the trials and sufferings experienced at the physical plane at this stage are aimed at producing this psychological orientation and to qualify him for "Initiation" in Occult Mysteries.

Esoterically, Capricornus represented the determination of the neophyte who affirmed, "Not mine, by Thy Will be done", whereas Aquarius stood for the release of the individual's impersonal life-force for active participation in the universal manifestative process. Under this impulsion, the spiritual forces finding no obstructions from personalized material proclivities descend on the individual in torrential flow and exert mighty influence in whatever altruistic Channel he is engaged in. Along with these spiritual beneficences working through such individuals, it draws them much closer to divine existence and often make them experience the divine proximity with them. The intonations from the unseen realm begin to activate their brain cells. Towards the end of this descent of the superconscious, the individual becomes a part of the divine powers working in Nature for the good of the mankind and for orderly evolution of the universe.

When the ego enters Pisces he gradually merges in the Sea of Immutability. He rests there. For him the Night of Brahma has dawned. He would now await the dawn of the new cycle. The individual identity at this State is obliterated. The individual has become one with the universe though mystically maintaining his identity which will be resurrected at the time of the next sweep of life-wave when it will arise once more at the level already attained and begin its new journey, when it will again immerse oneself in matter, gain further and deeper realization and arrive at greater and higher understanding of his real nature.

Moolam represents the first asterism providing the initial impetus for smooth Operation of Sattwic impulses. The asterisms that follow do not lead to peaceful, trouble free and affluent conditions at the physical level. But at inner levels these asterisms arouse deep spiritual energy and insight into cosmic laws. They motivate the individual to cooperate and support the universal evolutionary process. All the nine asterisms included in this category create turbulence in physical life but on the inner plane they gradually lead to beatitude and fulfillment of one's final destiny. Moolam is the first in this series and as such its taşk is colossal. It completely and radically changes the direction of one's efforts and motivation. It churns the past karmic accumulations to bring them before the aspirant for their resolution. It creates explosive situations. The impulses begun at this stage often seem very insignificant and inconsequential but over the series of lives that follow they vitally affect the inner growth and realization. The asterism clears the past impediments and adapts the ego for the advent of the Superconscious. The most important of Moolam is to fostering the urge towards Liberation, Moksha.

Under Purva Ashada the turbulence begins to subside with the beginning of adaptation between the outer and the inner as well as between the individual and his immediate surroundings. The inflow of creative energy and greater attraction towards altruistic goals gives rise to new interests and new Channels of social action. While the past karmic forces are borne with fortitude, new lines of activities begin to inculcate a sense of satisfaction and trust in the Supreme Power. Purva Ashada purifies the consciousness and prepares the individual to recognize the positive aspect of every trying Situation. It makes the individual realize that all forms of acquisitions, at every level whether mundane or spiritual, necessarily lead to sorrow and frustration so it is always desirous to be generous and self-sacrificing. The individual at Purva Ashada becomes spiritually motivated, idealistically oriented and to a great extent outward turned. He begins to recognize, even if it is very dim in the beginning, divinity in every individual and in every form of manifestation.

Uttara Ashada represents the State of the mind that results from the orientation, which occurred at the previous asterism. Both these asterisms express two aspects of the same basic impulse. Purva Ashada represents the active aspect of the momentum whereas Uttara Ashada stands for the consequences of the same active force. The previous asterism prepared the aspirant to receive greater light and power; the inevitable process of testing the preparedness of a candidate led his trials under Uttara Ashada. It involved arousal of various latent qualities and activation of the inner subconscious nature of the individual. During the middle of this animation the intensity of the trial reached its zenith, which happens under Capricornus. With the realization of the universality of the indwelling principle in man, especially after the successful completion of the trials, the consciousness of the neophyte expands enormously. He now begins to receive flashes of cosmic unity at various levels of manifestation; he also perceives unity of consciousness in all forms of creation. Uttara Ashada finally pours so much of universal energy, Light and Power that the individual now becomes, in a way a part of the universal spiritual forces. While functioning, consciously or unconsciously, in this capacity and discharging his responsibilities for the good of the many, he intensely delves deeper in his own psyche to comprehend its subtler nature and at the same time to work as a mirror of the Divine. A new experience of Truth Consciousness dawns on him and he feels as if a new life, a life full of light and power has descended upon him. With such an orientation, the ego enters the realm of Shravana, the 22nd asterism, though still operating under Capricornus.

Shravana represents passivity or attuning oneself to listening to the Divine Music in a very direct manner. It is a State of intense penance and control over all of one's sense Operations and restraint over involuntary reflexes. At this stage all forms of attachments are transcended and the individual is attuned to universal life force so as to receive Superconscious without any let or hindrance. Such a difficult preparation continues the purificatory practices begun during the course of earlier asterisms and the astro-mental bodies are cleansed meticulously. With the attainment of perfect stillness of all the sheaths having silenced the involuntary activities of lower quaternary, the ego is able to receive the reflection of its higher consciousness represented by its Atma-Buddhi-Manas. With clarity of perception, the ego perceives its oneness with the Supreme Spirit but with it also dawns the loneliness of the journey. Silence is intensely trying; it makes the ego desolate and desperate. That is what happens at Shravana but soon after when the bridge is crossed the ego is established in the Universal Self and becomes full of celestial ecstasy. This exalted State of consciousness occurs under the next asterism namely Dhanistha.

Half of Dhanistha lies in Capricornus and the other half under Aquarius. It represents the most fruitful and satisfying phase of egoic unfoldment. It is the active counterpart of which Shravana is the passive, receptive and sensitive aspect under which the intonations of the Real ity is received. The individual is now thrilled with the ecstatic ascent and he dances with joy at this ascent. He is now exposed to the guidance and regulations under Divine Forces. In order to prepare the ego to fully absorb this divine downpour, it has to undergo the demolition of the last and remaining vestiges of its materialistic attachments. But this is a very tormenting experience, which has however, to be endured before one could progress further. When the ego completes its lessons under Capricornus and enters into Aquarius and becomes outward oriented, it has joined the Occult Hierarchy, which is a matter of great jubilation in the history of egoic unfoldment. Now onward the ego begins to express in its all activities the will of the Supreme.

Dhanistha produced god-intoxication, realization of divine bliss and the irresistible urge to unite with the infinite. But Satbhisak unfolded the uniqueness of the divine scintilla manifesting through the ego. When the vanity of egotism is perceived and the source of inner upsurge and inner illumination is recognized, the psycho-spiritual trials of the ego have completed their task. Under Satbhisak, the candidate is ready to stand before the portals of Divine Wisdom and to knock at the door. But before the candidate is permitted inside the archaic Mysteries, he is once again tested and examined before his presentation for Initiation. Every nook and corner of his inner life is thoroughly churned for the burning of the dross before the new dawn of Immensity and a new birth. But this process of inculcating new values and a new orientation in life is like sowing seeds in a pulverized field. The excruciating pain involved in the process can be borne only with strong determination. But the inner vitality to withstand the same is also contributed by Satbhisak itself. Satbhisak brings out the special qualities, the special Ray on which the ego is evolving, before it enters the last lap of its egoic journey.

Purva Bhadrapada leads to one-pointedness in the devotion to the divine creative mission; the ego is no longer concerned about its personal evolution or its Separation from the universal life. Its loyalty is to the Occult Hierarchy and the Work. One-pointedness is an essential qualification for the Performance of this onerous responsibility. The intense aspiration draws the attention of Higher Beings, which by itself draws upon the individual highly surcharged spiritual forces. It also leads to protection by higher powers. Such Protections are accorded to prepare the aspirant to stand on his own feet without any external support. At Purva Bhadrapada, the aspirant needs guidance in his new Situation, which is radically different from what he experienced so far. The spiritual or the occult world has a much different set of laws with very powerful repercussions. The candidates at Purva Bhadrapada are trained by higher beings to wield these highly sensitive powers very adroitly. Purva Bhadrapada marked the culmination as well as termination of the trials of the neophyte, which began at the very outset of Sattwic impulses; now the individual has become an active agent of Nature in disseminating its beneficent powers.

The extension of the last quarter of Purva Bhadrapada in Pisces ushers those egos, which have transcended their karmic bondage, among the Adepts who are actively supporting Nature in her creative process. During the course of Uttara Bhadrapada, these egos are taken almost to the divine height. The divine qualities, which are often described in occult literature as those of perfected planetary spirits, are gradually actualised at this stage. This is the stage, which is attained at Uttara Bhadrapada; the ego now becomes a part of the divine intelligence, which is responsible for supervising the evolution of cosmos, Operation of its stability and harmony. The ego is primarily attuned to his subjectivity, his objectivity is inconsequential. The mystic nature of Uttara Bhadrapada impulse is essentially an extension of Purva Bhadrapada and the two combined together carry the neophyte to the State of bliss and beatitude ever engaged in disseminating light, knowledge and creativity.

Revati, which provides the resting place for the egos, which completed their assigned task for the specific cycle under Uttara Bhadrapada, is essentially the State of bliss, the land of harmony and peace. At this realm, peace passes understanding and the separate existence of the being has ceased to exist and it rests as an undifferentiated (though mystically maintaining its unique identity) being. It is the region of the Sea of Immutability, the final Dissolution and the Brahmas Night. But after the Manvantaric rest the journey begins once again. The chain of evolution represented by the zodiacal triplicity under Rajasic, Tamasic and Sattwic attitudes is almost eternal. One cycle of the pilgrimage may be over, but there are many more cycles to follow. In that sense neither Revati is the last link, nor Ashwini the first, it is all a part of the Mayavic web of Illusion!

RAJASIC ATTRIBUTE

The Rajasic impulse begins the process of manifestation. It reawakens the slumbering egos from the Sea of Immutability and impels them to commence their terrestrial journey. It marked the initial thrill, which assumed tremendous differentiation and monumental dimension during the course of time. Time and space also were the outcome of this impulse for it was also related with the manifestation of the universe as well as with human beings. From the very beginning it was accompanied by the Law of Karma and the Septenary Principle in man and the universe.

The origin and evolution of man passed through several phases before the final form of men as we know them emerged. It started from complete dormancy to the awareness of subjectivity aroused with the thirst for sentient experiences. It was also accompanied with the craving to create. Sensitivity to external conditions marked the stage, The Fohat, the essence of cosmic electricity, differentiated the consciousness, imparted to it the seeds of septenary streams of objective as well as subjective manifestation. The Rajasic movement further produced the differentiation between males and females, and so the creative activities gathered further momentum.

The human beings began as a racial entity. Their disparate consciousness, in due course become the source of egotism, I-am-ness, delusion, envy jealousy and many other aberrations, arose at a much later phase of manifestation. In the initial phase, the man formed a part of group consciousness. The Kritikas led to the emergence of the Polarians the first root race of mankind who were formless, nebulous, floating mass of consciousness. Soon afterwards, the First Root Race, acquired definite contours and acquired cloud-like formations. They are called the Hyperboreans. The Lemurians who possessed instinct and responses of the animal nature developed under Mrigashirsa. The highly developed intellectual Atlanteans with high scientific achievements of which the Greeks had spoken about, arose under Ardra. Their highly accentuated egotism and lack of ethical values soon led to their obliteration. The Punarvasu carefully guided and nurtured the emergence of the Aryan or the fifth Root Race.* The various qualities and potentials needed for future human civilisations were also provided by the following two asterisms namely, Pushya and Ashlesha. The Rajasic impulses sufficiently provided the evolving humanity with necessary light under which it could extricate itself from the material thralldom and from the veils of spiritual ignorance, avidya.

The Law of Karma operates from the very beginning of manifestation. It is concomitant of the evolutionary process. It contains within it the impetus to enter into terrestrial thralldom. It generates adequate motive force to externalize the subjectivity of the Germ. It leads it to multi-dimensional extension and to produce sorrow and frustration. Under all these conditions, the same Karmic impulse of action and reaction aroused in the evolving egos the aspiration for extricating them from their materiality and to retrace their steps backward. The sensitivity and experiences produced by karmas of different kinds induced them to extricate themselves from their material sheaths. The universality of the law accompanied the ego throughout its pilgrimage. During the Rajasic phase of evolution, it immersed the divine spark afflicted by craving for sentient experiences, into deeper layers of materiality. It enveloped the divine spark with several coats of ignorance, but at the innermost core it also produced infinite wisdom and archetypal perfection towards which the momentum generated by Rajasic impulses could take it during the following evolutionary phases.

The Rajasic impulses are expressions of the Sankalpa Shakti, the Seer-Will, of the Absolute All, which stirred the slumbering egos into action. Every movement is an expression of Divine Will. Its power is expressed by Ashwinis, Agni, Vasu; its beatitude is represented by Bhaga and wisdom by Brahma, Bhramanspati and the Nagas during the Rajasic phase of creative movement. It is accompanied by cataclysmic changes, radical transformations, churning of the deeper psyche in order to manifest perfection and wisdom inherent in every formation of creation.

The four signs of the zodiac and the first nine asterisms which symbolized different stages of Rajasic activities cannot in fact be put in rigid categories because these impulses are all connected in an integrated manner with one another, yet for a detailed understanding of their characteristics and the mode of Operation they could be studied separately as distinct identities. It should also be borne in mind that the primary Rajasic movement is affected by Tamasic and Sattwic impulses at its secondary and tertiary levels.

(*) A brief and informative description of these Root Races is given in *The Evolution of Man* by J. Emile Marcault. and Iwan A Hawlickzek. (1931) London

ARIES (Mesha)

(00°00'-30°00')

The first sign of the zodiac represents the beginning of the sentient existence: the Seer-Will - Sankalpa* - reverberated the universe with manifestative activities and inspired the living entities, the egos dormant in the Sea of Immutability to once more commence their evolutionary pilgrimage. *The Book of Dzryan* described it as "the Vibration that sweeps along touching with its swift wing the whole universe and the Germ that dwelled in Darkness: the darkness that breathes over the slumbering waters of life"¹. But the world was not made in one day, nor did life on it evolved in a moment. The ram's head and the horns, which symbolized this zodiacal impulse, represented this sweeping Vibration in its basic creative nature at the very initial stage of subjectivity of manifestation. These Symbols referred to the generative power and the reproductive force latent in initial manifestative urge. Ram Stands for pristine innocence and reawakening of life. In Puranic stories, there is a mention of it suggestive of its recreative potential². After the head of Daksha Prajapati was burnt, it was replaced by the head of a ram when he had to be resurrected. Explaining this allegory, H.P. Blavatsky mentioned that "Daksha, who is regarded as the chief progenitor, is pointed out as the creator of the physical man, in the 'fable', which makes him lose his head from the body in the general strife between the Gods and the Raumas. This head being burnt in the fire, is replaced by the head of a ram ... now, the ram's head and horns are ever the symbol of generating power and of the reproductive force and are phallic ... it is Daksha who establishes the era of man engendered by sexual intercourse. This mode of procreation did not occur suddenly, however, as one might think, but required long ages before it become the one 'natural' way."³. The ram symbol assigned to the first zodiacal sign is only a Suggestion of the fact that the divine resolve has been made to reactivate the life process once again.

- () *Sankalpa* = A solemn resolve to accomplish an observance
- (1) *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge : Stanzas from the Secret Book of Dzryan*, H.P Blavatsky. California. Book I.. Stanza III.2
- (2) *The Secret Doctrine*. HP. Blavatsky, Madras, Vol. III.. p. 189
- (3) Ibid For detailed reference see Ardra. the sixth Asterism. Subsequently

The Sanskrit name for the first zodiac is Mesha. It means a ram but it has several other appellations also. The sign is also known as Aja (the Unborn, Bralima), Vishwa (the universe), Kriya (activity) and Adya (the beginning). These epithets emphasize the zodiac as the beginning of certain activities, the commencement of the egoic pilgrimage. It stands for the beginning of a new life-impulse, the emergence of a new wave of manifestation, reawakening from the Shoreless Ocean of Immutability in which the egos were assimilated during the previous cycle. The name Aja implied that the activity was still not manifest. It was still at the noumenal stage. It represented the sankalpa, the solemn resolve to manifest. But the impulse to manifest was still unborn. It has however, the quality of limitless expansion, growth and unfoldment. At this stage, the latent energy, Badwanala, the submarine fire, becomes active and is changed into dynamic life force, Agni, the fire which enlivens ever]' form of manifestation. As far as the evolving ego is concerned, it is still contained in latency; it is still unborn and unmanifest.

For such reasons, in predictive astrology, the Arians are full of inner vitality, energy agitating to burst forth and externalize itself. Such individuals are full of inspiration, hope and expectation. They are full of schemes for action and plans to implement. They are impulsive, always eager to jump into action and be creative. But they await certain extraneous Stimulus to energize them into action.

The fire in Aries is latent. It needs some support for its ignition and manifestation. The creative faculties of Aries are evident only with the help of some supportive planet. The direction of the utilization of its energy, the latent fire, depended upon the planet associated or aspecting it. The same is the case with Brahma, the Creator. On being assigned the task to create the universe, he first went into deep penance, Tapas, and meditated for millions of years in order to comprehend the task and acquire the necessary power for its accomplishment before directly engaging himself in the programme. Aries represented that State of Brahma when he was deeply absorbed in his meditational practice prior to his active involvement in his manifestative activities. Aries represented the subjectivity of Bralima, the Unborn The intense absorption of Brahma in Tapas, penance. Ruthless aggressive ferocity or the one-pointedness for the attainment of his goal and the power to resurrect the dead, the old and the decrepit matter and vivify the same are some of the basic impulses which radiate from this sign. The egos in the

process of manifestation primarily incubate at this stage where the motherly Brahma broods over the various qualities that could ultimately be infused in them.

Aries is considered a quadruped. The ancient seers described the evolutionary Status of an entity in terms of its number of legs. According to this system of nomenclature, animals were quadruped, human beings were bipeds and the devas, the gods, (as for example, Ajaikapada, the Vedic deity presiding over the 25th asterism namely Purva Bhadrapada) were described as single-footed suggesting their superb concentration and equipoise. Aries described as a quadruped refers to its balance on its four legs, which implied its undeveloped mind-principle. The lack of differentiation at this stage from the 'Boundless All' where 'the sons had not awakened yet for the new wheel and their pilgrimage thereon' but only the Vibration of new life was sweeping over them implied that the differentiated consciousness was yet 'unborn' and was without any material component. It also lacked equipoise to stand completely on its own. It was a stage of noumenon where only the seer-will had begun to vibrate.

Aries is described powerful during night. Usually a human individual is active during day and quiescent during night. The period of such repose is characterized by consciousness of the individual withdrawn to the sub conscient level; the ego often delves deep in its deeper nature and gets a glimpse of its higher possibilities and ultimate destiny during this period. The Yoga literature has given much details of dream, deep-sleep and samadhi (deep meditation) stages of consciousness - Swapna, Susupti, and Turya states - the last of it being the fourth State of consciousness when the soul experiences its identity with the Brahman or the Supreme Self . The deeper levels of consciousness are experiences during the period of quiescence in night. The identification of Aries with nocturnal activities reveals its greater concern with non-physical aspects of life. On the mundane plane, the Aries born individuals are often affected more by influences descending from the non-physical realm than the common humdrum relationships of everyday existence.

Another important feature of Aries mentioned in astrological texts makes it 'a wonderer in forests'. From a superficial Standpoint, there is nothing unusual for rams or goats to wander in forests, but applied to human beings or to unmanifest egos, it assumes an enigmatic, mythical aroma. It is however, true that the Aries impulse makes an individual other-wordly, but more importantly, the Statement refers to its preparedness for 'Initiatory Rites'. The occult literature mentioned that such rites take place in secret mystery schools usually situated in deserted places, barren deserts, deep forests or at high mountain caves. The aspirants well-prepared to absorb powerful forces descending upon them, which occur at these rites, received the knowledge of Nature's secret powers, which in due course changed them into superman. At these ceremonies, the disciples are drawn closer to the occult brotherhood and thereby they become part of beneficent forces of Nature. Such secret rites are performed in the privacy of secluded places not easily accessible to the common folk. The impulses vibrant at the Aries stage of egoic development greatly accentuated the vibrations around the ego making it more prone to receive occult teachings and be a Channel of such forces. The sensitivity of individuals under this impulse is greatly intensified. There is considerable expansion of consciousness, almost responsive to all pervasive life-force in the universe capable of establishing close affinity with life at all levels. In spite of such receptivity and immense growth potential, the consciousness is still in its latency. It is not yet well defined in its nature and form.

Astrologically Mars rules over Aries. Its primary impetus is to externalize whatever is within. Mars aimed at bringing to light that which is in darkness; it unveils with ferocity that which is within. It contains within it the Divine Spark of which it forms an aspect. The function of Mars is to cast aside the superficiality and to expose the inner or the latent divinity. The quality of the planet is much activated at the commencement of the zodiacal impulses. Mars exerts enormous force in achieving its goal; it exercises tremendous energy in order to germinate the latent qualities of the seed on which it exerts its pressure. The Sun's exaltation in this sign signifies the Solar Logos making its imprint on each seed sprouting under the Arian impulse. The vision of the ultimate self-realization and the inspiration to actualize the possibility make the Arian child very ambitious and full of fiery enthusiasm. It is this impulse of courage, hope and enthusiasm which bestows adequate momentum to emerging egos to struggle from their State of subjectivity to assume various robes of materiality in order to actualise their immense potential and to traverse the difficult path of self-realization so as to regain their pristine nature.

This task facing the egos entering the new cycle of evolution is made easy by Varuna, the Vedic deity presiding over the sign. Varuna is the regent of the sea and the sky. The Vedic seers worshipped him as

the lord of the vast expanse, the Void, which contained within it "all, the potential as well as the possibilities of every form that ever was, at present exists or will ever assume any form". The scope of expansion under Aries, therefore, is immense for which it receives effective support from Nature's finer creative agents. The association of Varuna with Aries, supported by Mars, Sun, Jupiter and Saturn, provided the necessary sustenance and the necessary impetus needed for the successful launching of the new babe, the ram, on its eternal Manavantric pilgrimage. The transformation from quiescence to activity, impelled by the radiant creative energy vibrant throughout the cosmic void giving each life-particle the thirst for sentient existence, trishna, is not a sudden phenomenon. The evolutionary processes is sustained at several levels by many diverse kinds of support and guidance. During its sojourn even within this sign many stellar impulses are exerted to carry further the vibrant conscious life-particles with their enormous latent divinity.

ASHWINI

(00° 00'- 13°20')

Ashwini covers the first 13 ° 20' of the zodiac. It plays a momentous role in reawakening the egos lying dormant in their Manavantaric sleep. In their pristine nature they are free from all traces of materiality; the divine spark is wrapped in its ever invisible robes slumbering once again in the Shoreless Sea of Immutability. The first asterism is concerned with resurrection of these egos and putting them once again on their new cycle of egoic unfoldment and self-knowledge. Ashwini is chosen as the first asterism to provide the impulse required to accomplish the task. It serves as an important link between the eternal sleep and the necessary series of transformations needed for the purpose.

Ashwini belongs to Akasic Tattwa. It is the subtle ethereal fluid pervading the whole universe. It is the substratum of the quality of, and often identified with Brahma, the cosmic creative principle. H.P. Blavatsky considered this Tattwa even equal to Kundalini, the occult electricity, the alkahest of the Alchemists in one sense or the universal solvent, the same as anima mundi (the world soul) on the higher plane, as the astral light on the lower. Such qualities of Ashwini make it immensely powerful pervading throughout the universe and vibrating with creative energy. For this purpose, it provides by itself the necessary matrix. The fiery framework of Aries greatly facilitates Ashwini in the Performance of its basic functions.

Ashwini is related with Agni, the fire-god. The Vedic seers invoked Agni as the most critical among the three great deities namely Agni (fire), Vayu (air) and Surya (Sun) in the process of manifestation. Esoterically, these three deities represented three aspects of the same energy which the Tibetan Adepts described as Fohat, which is the universal propelling Vital Force at once the propeller and the resultant. Representing this basic force in manifestation, Agni manifests in heaven as Sun, in atmosphere or air it expresses itself as lightning, while on earth it is ordinary fire. In human beings it operates as the very life-essence without which human existence is impossible. Such being the universal source of energy with which Ashwini is linked, the first asterism assumes much significance in the evolutionary chain.

Under its impulsion, the latency of the seed slumbering in the Sea of Immutability representing the State of nothingness, the State of nihility, is energized and made conscious of its own divine possibilities. Its thirst for sentient existence is aroused under Ashwini. Ashwini Kumars, the Vedic deities presiding over the asterism, have enormous power to rejuvenate the decrepit, the age-worn form and to energize it with solar power. They complement the work of Pushan who presided over Revati, the last asterism. At that stage, the egos rested in their pure essence, in their pristine nature, in their subjectivity having become a part of nihil. Pushan sustained the qualities already acquired by the egos during their earlier evolutionary pilgrimage, preserved them and nourished them till their final hour had Struck and the solar rays Struck them once more heralding a new dawn. At that stage, Ashwini Kumars intervened and took over the charge of the egos to prepare them for their new enterprise, to provide them new hope and inspiration and to articulate their subjective nature into basic creative material blocs. This root expression of the subjective noumenon is often described as the abstract deific feminine principle, the undifferentiated substance known in Hindu metaphysics as Mulaprakriti. In fact, it is the root of Nature or of Matter as the building-blocs with which the entire creation is constituted. Ashwini being such an initial impulse is that link in the evolutionary chain, which provides continuity as well as newness to solar warmth, expressed as the speck of consciousness. This warmth sweeps over the slumbering waters of Life and sends a thrill of awareness to innumerable divine specks in the Shoreless Sea of Immutability, which under this impulse arise once again and commence their new pilgrimage.

The word Ashwini representing the first asterism means 'bom of a mare'. The word may even imply a horse or a mare, besides a cow. These quadrupeds are abundantly referred to in the Vedas. A cow as well as a horse represented two companion ideas of Light and Energy, Consciousness and Force. The Vedas spoke of the wealth of cows and the wealth of horses to suggest richness of mental illumination and abundance of vital energy. As such, Ashwini referred to the outcome of creative energy; it represented the force, which is positively directed towards evolutionary unfoldment. Ashwini is associated with direction of the tremendous creative rejuvenating power, which works towards unfoldment of the inner or the latent capabilities. The first zodiacal sign symbolized by a ram produced an impulse of generative and reproductive force. The asterism and the zodiacal sign are both well harmonized to each other. According to predictive astrology, any planet occupying the first quarter of Ashwini, that is the first 3°20' of Aries is highly auspicious attaining Vargottam position in Navamsa chart. Under Aries, the evolutionary impulse emphasized power, courage, perseverance and endurance while under Taurus it is that the consciousness becomes purposeful, introspective, thoughtful and full of sustaining energy for fruitful goals. The impulses aroused under Ashwini prepared the egos to effectively respond to zodiacal impulses. Taurus is represented by a bull which in fact is a 'he-cow' representing the masculine counterpart of the creative nature of consciousness symbolized by a leader of the Community, a powerful and dignified individual. The first asterism Ashwini provided the necessary foundation for the emergence of such powerful egos. Ashwini appearing at the initial stage of egoic pilgrimage provided to the egos sufficient energy and power, inspiration and initiative to meet the future burden of creative responsibilities effectively.

Ashwini is not only associated with power and energy but esoterically, it is connected with the seven Channels of evolutionary outflow. Etymologically, the word Ashwini Stands for the number 7 (seven). The Channels of energy and the streams of consciousness emerging from the Sea of Dissolution, the 12th sign of the zodiac are united together at Ashwini stage to once again stream out on their seven distinct paths. The septenary force-channels have been described in the Vedas as the seven rivers, the Sapta Sindhu; the Upanishads spoke of them as the seven flames of sacrificial fire. These seven Channels contained within them the promise and potency of every quality of life as well as the realization of the potency of every quality of Spirit. Ashwini functioned as the main aquaduct through which the seven Channels flowed to the world of manifestation.

Ashwini functioned under the planetary rulership of Ketu, the southern Node of the Moon, which is one of the most dreaded of the (Vedic) planets. Even if it is merely a geometric point signifying the point of intersection of the Moon's orbit with the Ecliptic, and considered as a Shadow Planet in Vedic astrology, it is allegorized as the hind portion of the Celestial Dragon, Rahu, and together Rahu-Ketu helped the gods in retrieving nectar from the Sea of Immutability. The Vedas however, eulogized Ketu as of variegated colours and seated in a divine chariot that goes round the Mount Meru. The Vedic seers associated Ketu with the power of inner illumination as well as with the power of Divine Wisdom. It possessed deathless effulgence. It is considered as a counterpart of Rahu, the bitter enemy of the luminaries namely the Sun and the Moon. Ketu is basically of intense mystic nature; it is capable to dissolve all material and sense experiences into their essential qualities, transform them into powers of Divine Wisdom and make them intrinsic part of one's core consciousness. Ketu's rulership over Ashwini informs of its power to transform the decrepit body, the illusory experiences and material afflictions into conscience, detachment and spiritual illumination. Ketu implants in the innermost nature of man the quality of detachment, disillusionment and intense longing for return to the centre, the source from which all life began. Ketu's regency over Ashwini infuses in its impulse the irresistible longing to return to one's original source, the Supreme Self.

This impulse constantly encourages and inspires the ego throughout its long pilgrimage to proceed forward, brave the trials and tribulations, face the tempests and deluges, traverse the lonely forests* and barren deserts, cross the vale of shadow till the luxuriant verdure of spiritual delight is attained. Ashwini under Ketu guides the soul to its goal of 'becoming' and unfolding its real nature. It recognizes the imperceptible musk of one's spiritual uniqueness in the evolving identity. Its invisible aroma or its voice of the silence constantly impels the ego till its very end. And Mars, the ruler of the sign (Aries) is ever present to provide the necessary strength, enthusiasm and aspiration for attaining the ultimate mission. When the ego comes under the influence of Ashwini, there is radical transformation in its psyche: the consciousness blissfully reposing in eternal quiescence is suddenly agitated, the radiance of solar rays sweeps over it to arouse it once more to activity and to enthuse it to immerse once more in manifestation. The mutation of the latent subjectivity is the chief characteristic of the first quarter of the Ashwini impulse ruled by Mars.

The second quarter of Ashwini (3° 20' - 6° 40') is ruled by Venus. It arouses Sensation. Even the Vedas spoke of desire arising in the beginning. It produced the thirst for sensate experiences. It provided the capacity to feel. The third quarter (6° 40' - 10° 00') ruled by Mercury activates the mind-principle. It leads to the recognition of pleasant and the unpleasant experiences. Moon rules over the fourth quarter (10° 00' - 13° 20'), which makes the differentiating ego introspective, watchful, and conscious of one's new changes. The main distinction between Revati and Ashwini lies in unruffled quiescence of the former while there is mutative transformation under the latter. Under Revati the entire consciousness is withdrawn like the shy turtle within its carapace and has become indistinguishable from the myriads of souls in the natural vivarium of the Waters of Dissolution represented by Pisces. Under Ashwini, the solar ray begins to thrill the slumbering egos and under the warmth of a new dawn, waxing stronger and reviving the awareness of its past self the soul begins to glide forth from its secure retreat. Breaking loose from its protective shrine, it extends its silvery thread and reaches onward: beholding its image on the waves of Space it whispers, "This is I" and its soul is caught in the web of delusion. Ashwini heralds this spread of the web of delusion and the loss of beatitude of the celestial delight. The thirst for sensate experiences takes away the ego from its repose and pushes it in the welter of terrestrial confusion; it has agitated the inner nature of man though there has not yet been any palpable change. Everything so far between Revati and Ashwini has been subjective, inner, at the level of awareness without any overt expression on the objective plane.

Ashwini Kumars who superintended the impulses emerging from the first asterism are said to be "effectual in action", powers of movement and force in moving on their paths; they are the powers that carry over the Rishis as in a ship and save them from drowning in the ocean". They are both powers of Light and nervous force. Sri Aurobindo described them "as riders on the horses, symbolic of force and specially of life energy and nervous force, the Prana. They are gods of enjoyment, seekers of honey; they are physicians, they bring back youth to the old, health to the sick, wholeness to the maimed". Another characteristic of the Ashwinis is movement, swift, violent, irresistible. They are like birds in their swiftness, like the mind, like the wind. They bring in their chariot ripe or perfected satisfaction to man, they are creators of bliss, Mayas.¹ They are intimately related with solar energy, with seven

(1) *The Secret of the Veda*, Sri Aurobindo, Pondicheny, pp. 77-78

Channels of creative flows; their task is to transform the egos from their cosmic passivity to terrestrial mayavic* manifestation. They help the egos to surmount the innumerable impediments expected during their terrestrial journey. The Ashwinis possess much knowledge of the secret forces operating in the universe. It is only thus that they discharge their responsibilities effectively. In doing so, the Ashwinis immerse the egos into the realm of Maya, illusion, make them taste the pleasures of transient sensations and at the same time inspire them to sacrifice all their attainments for acquiring the final illumination. They make the egos sacrifice all their fruits of action in order to attain their lost supreme position. They motivate them to abandon all enjoyment connected with Karmendriyas and Jananendriyas, action-and knowledge organs, so as to taste the highest spiritual ecstasy. These possibilities at the initial phase of the egoic journey are implanted as the self-generating seed in its latency to blossom under more favourable clime at a later stage. The vision of Ashwinis is extensive, its power immense and life-force, Prana, vibrant.

The Ashwinis are the sons of Savitar, the Sun, born under special circumstances. The Ashwinis were born of Sun in its form of a horse and his wife in the form of a mare running round the universe.' The allegory refers to the imperative of stepping down the primeval radiation of the central cosmic energy-source (Sun) to make it adaptable for the purpose of manifestation which could occur as a union between positive (horse) and the negative (mare) electrical energy (horse-power). The Ashwinis rejuvenated the old, almost fossilized remains of Chyavan Rishi who wanted to marry royal princesses. The story refers to the powers of Ashwinis to transform the egos assimilated in primeval matter into living entities and restore them their celestial puissance and their divine nature. The Ashwinis are not much concerned about the ethicality of their actions: they are willing and prepared to revive the dead beings but are not much aware of the desirability of the action. They are by nature physicians who could restore the latent life-force but are not able to judge or discern the propriety of doing the same. Another feature of Ashwinis is their involvement with the cyclic order of manifestation. The asterism under Ashwini Kumars represented a bundle of solar energy exposed for activating new creation, a new evolutionary dawn, but the mind-principle, which makes the evolving entity human, was yet in latency.

Under this impulse there is eagerness to involve in the creative process, to express one's valour, skill and enthusiasm but the wisdom of Divine Plan of egoic unfoldment is absent at this stage.

To sum up, Ashwini, the first asterism, represented the solar energy arousing the slumbering egos in Manvantaric Deluge and channelizing them in seven evolutionary streams. It guides the cosmic electrical energy, Fohat, in ushering a new dawn with power to create and to reproduce. Ashwini represents the eagerness to involve oneself in creative mission but it does not have the blue-print of manifestation. It is explosive in nature but the purpose of explosion, the specific goal of manifestation is not recognized by it. Thus there are some contradictions and vagueness in Ashwini impulses.

In predictive astrology, those who are born under Ashwini are restless, they chafe, fret and fume under the restrictions imposed by their life-conditions. They are enthusiastic, eager to act, impulsive, idealistic, but unaware of the vast potential of energy lying latent in them. They lack the guidance, inner light, the wisdom, to decide the appropriateness of their various activities. There is more animal-like instinct overpowering their basic momentum than the human-like rationality deciding and regulating their course of action. Ashwini comprises one aspect of Shiva-Shakti Tattwa, which provides the necessary foundation for manifestation. Shiva Tattwa represents the subjective reality, while Shakti Tattwa referred to the power, which enabled the former to express itself and be active in manifestation. Shakti Tattwa is represented in the stellar scheme by Bharani, the second asterism, while the former namely the Shiva Tattwa is represented by Ashwini, the first asterisms. These asterisms taken together operated in the realm of abstraction, the task of objectivation of complete noumenal subjectivity in the awareness of the reawakening ego is relegated to Bharani which is symbolized by a female generative organ. Bharani is a Channel to preserve the creative power for its incubation till its final transformation into the desired form is achieved. Ashwini and Bharani are two aspects of the Arian impulse characterized by Aja or the unborn creative energy, Brahma.

BHARANI

(13°20'-26°40')

Ashwini and Bharani together cover most of Aries leaving only 3° 20' of it which is occupied by the first quarter of Kritika, the third asterism. Ashwini and Bharani are two aspects of the same stellar impulse, namely, the readiness to manifest, and the thirst for sentient existence. Ashwini represented the inward turned subjective State of consciousness which energised the "Germ that dwelleth in darkness" while Bharani represented the same consciousness when it was outward turned and envisioned the evolutionary design of the universe of sensuous experience which made it the Immaculate Mother from whom proceeds all the gods - the anthropomorphized creative forces. The differences between the two asterisms however, operated in the realm of subjectivity itself in spite of their contrariety.

Bharani is described as Sudra by caste, elephant by species, and is associated with west direction while Venus is assigned its rulership. Saturn is debilitated in this asterism. The vedic deity Yama, the god of death, presides over it. The asterism is symbolized by the female generative organ. These characteristics aim at pointing to the impact of the asterism on the awakening egos whose latency in the Great Deep, darkness of the Infinitude, has been stirred.

The Sanskrit work 'Bharani' means 'she who supported', 'she who nourished'. Aries is the Unborn, Unmanifest, Brahma the Creator; it pervaded the entire universe under suitable conditions and breathed over the slumbering waters of life. Before the latent potential is transformed, externalized and motivated into activity, there is a state where the potential in its passive as well as in its active form is preserved, nourished and supported. Bharani represented that stage of preservation and support. The ancient seers associated Bharani with Sudras among the castes, elephants as the beast of burden, and west among the various directions in the sky all of which in the common mind supported the idea that Bharani is the impulse, which provided the essential conditions for preservation of the Community from its disintegration. Sudras in the ancient Indian society were those who supported the existing organized Community and served it as its very foundation. The elephant was the animal which transported individuals and goods safely especially at the time of deluge when the individuals did not have any other means of transportation. The elephant carried itself majestically. It was valued even for what was within it - its trunk, bones, wisdom, memory, loyalty and immense prestige that it provided to its possessor. The common people thought the western direction as the place where the Sun resided

during period of its rest (night) to return on the next dawn to provide warmth and nourishment to the people. These features of Bharani were related with its basic impulse. Bharani supported the egos waiting in readiness for their ensuing active new cyclic journey. It contained within itself essence of all past relationships and karmic obligations of the ego. These relationships were connected with something inner, subjective, powerful and precious. The activities under Bharani are veiled; they are in the realm of consciousness whose expression on the form-side of life is minimal. They make the ego look without, consider the possibilities for its external manifestation although the commencement of the egoic externalization is not yet on the card.

Bharani is ruled by Venus while Ashwini functioned under Ketu. These planets are complementary aspects of the same evolutionary impulse. Ketu worked subjectively activating mutation and providing inner illumination while Venus increased sensitivity to sensuous experiences and enabled the ego to gain lessons helpful for its new task. Ketu worked through mind to gain understanding of different aspects of life and it approached the life-process from the centre, from the inner core of existence, external relationships and repetition of sensuous pleasures. Ketu withdraws the individual from physical actions and activates him on the psychological plane while Venus induces him towards physical relationships, interpersonal interactions and experiences of manifestation to derive the same lesson. The very symbol of Venus (^) is a combination of circle without its central point which represented the matrix of solar manifestation, and cross, which represented the union of positive and negative forces leading to the manifestation of the physical existence. Under the impact of Venus the ego is attracted to sentient existence. The past urges latent in it gradually revive the memory of its past propensities, samskaras, and induce it to repeat the experiences once more. What Ashwini anticipated on the basis of wisdom and understanding of the life-process the ego under Bharani recapitulates and experiences physically. From the old, grey-haired, care-wormed visage produced under the influence of Ketu, Ashwinis transform the egos as young, abullent, frolicsome, thirsting for new experiences and entrust them to the charge of Venusian Bharani to grow and be aware of their physical limitations. The overall restrictive impact of Aries however, does not enable them to break the ground and come out in the openness of the infinitude. Ashwini operated on the subjective plane so it had the limitless expanse of psychological expansion; the first asterism belonged to the airy element while the restrictions operating under Bharani aroused much fire within it. The inner urges under Bharani are ready to blaze forth. Bharani is fiery but the fire in it is still latent while Kritika, the following asterism, which also is fiery, actualizes the flames.

Bharani represented the intermediate stage in the growth of the seed activated under Ashwini. Bharani sustains and nourishes the sprouting seeds. The ancient seers symbolized Bharani by the female generative organ. It is through this Channel of expression that the subjective male energy could combine with its objective and receptive female counterpart; Ashwini by itself is unable to unite with the universal generatrix. In an allegory it is mentioned that Sukanya refused the suggestions (and overtures) of Ashwini Kumars to marry them instead of marrying the old and decrepit Chyavan Rishi but she preferred the latter who was later rejuvenated by the Ashwini Kumars. The female generative organ which symbolized Bharani as a Channel for sensuous pleasure is a very superficial expression of the primary function of this human organ. The planetary ownership of the asterism by Venus does not depend upon Sensation, gratification and repetition of old pleasures and material happiness; it is important for what it leads to. What happens during Bharani impulsion is covered under darkness, under a veü not yet manifest; nonetheless its role in manifestation is substantial. Bharani represents the 'eternal unrevealed'. Without its association the essential cyclical Operation in Nature under which the dead becomes alive and rejuvenated and begins his journey once more could not be possible. The primary role of Venus, the ruler of the asterism, is to grant immortality which cannot happen if the continuity of experiences gained during various incarnations is not maintained, nourished and preserved. Detachment from material propensities without attaining Saturation and understanding their significance cannot release the ego from its bondage and thirst for sensate experiences and consequently lead it to immersion in matter. Sukracharya (Venus) performed 'a painful rite, imbibing the chalf with his head downward for a thousand year' which earned him the secret of life, the Mritasanjeevani, the power to revive the dead. Venus revives the deed into life. The immortality of the ego is made possible by a series of deaths and its revival to life tili the real secret of life is learnt and self-realization is attained. Venus as Usana is also the author of a code of law, the principles governing manifestation. The Law of Karma begins to operate at the very commencement of existence when subjectivity begins to objectify This is an operative principle manifest at every stage of/creation. Bharani prepares the incarnating egos for their cyclic journey of self-realization guided by their

experiences gained under this law. Venus oversees the Operation of both the immortality of egos gained through their successive births and the Law of karma under which they evolve.

The presiding deity of Bharani is Yama, the god of the death. The departed souls dwell under his watchful attention. He is regarded as an object of great terror. He is described as having two insatiable dogs with four eyes each having wide nostrils which guard the road to his abode and which the departed souls are advised to hurry past with all possible speed. Yama is represented as a black man wearing black garments: he rides upon a she-buffalo and is armed with a ponderous mace with a noose to secure his victims. His hold is resolute and irrevocable. Such a description of the Vedic deity, which presides over Bharani, is indeed not only terrifying but also very misleading especially when the asterism operates under Venus associated with the Law of Karma, the law governing the immortality of the soul. The Vedic hymns spoke of Yama as "the first of men that died and the first that departed to the celestial world. It was he who found out the way to the home, which cannot be taken away. Those who are now born follow by their own path to the place whither our ancient fathers have departed". Yama was the most ancient ancestor of mankind. Such invocations provided great assurance to the leadership of Yama: his regency over Bharani did not allude to his terrifying darker aspect but it referred to his power to revive and resurrect the souls. At Bharani, the egos are revived and put on their eternal pilgrimage. Blavatsky emphasised that Yama was not the god of death, but of Life-Eternal and personification of Karma itself. The Vedic seers considered Yama likewise a guardian of evolving egos, which needed resuscitation and revival till they could reach to their final destiny. Sukracharya and Yama are both in this function complementary to each other helping Bharani to preserve, protect and nourish the new entrants to their great journey. As such, Yama does not function as the god of death while presiding over Bharani; he superintends over the flow of Bharani impulse as a god of Life-Eternal.

H.P. Blavatsky described Yama as the very embodiment of the Law of Karma, which qualified him to be the god of Life-Eternal. Describing the events on higher planes after death, she stated, "the Hindu Chitrageeta reads out the account of every soul's life from his register called Agrasandhani, meaning prepared in advance, the register of human action kept by Yama". She further stated that "the scribes who kept a record of the actions of every soul are intimately associated with the destiny of every man and the birth of every child, whose life is already traced in the Astral Light —not fatalistically, but only because the future like the Past, is ever alive in the present — they may also be said to exercise an influence on the science of horoscopy". Yama's superintendence over Bharani aims at providing those ingredients of life, which could help the evolving soul to meet its future trials and tribulations effectively during the course of its future sojourn.

H.P. Blavatsky considered Yama to be the very personification of Karma and as such he is related with every soul at all times. "This law exists from and in Eternity, truly, for it is eternity itself; and as such, since no act can be coequal with Eternity, it cannot be said to act, for it is action itself"². Yama as such presiding over Bharani very patiently oversees and watches the action of the ego in its outward turnedness. Action or Karma begins from that very moment when the ego comes in relationship with objective existence, and result of Venusian impulse. Venus is patently subservient to Yama whose effort is to reflect the present in the light of ego's past and its future, that is its ultimate destiny. In order to fulfill this mission, Yama expresses the life-Eternal as several variants of the law of births and deaths, cyclic animation and dissolution and such other features of it. Yama is also the reign of righteousness.

He is accredited to have laid down the law of morality and ethical life, Dharma-Shastra. Under such a presiding deity, Bharani imposes upon emerging egos the rules of eternal life which they have to adhere to during their terrestrial journey. Bharani is the formative stage of the ego when the necessary foundation for its future life is laid.

Bharani is the counterpart of Ashwini; the latter is presided over by Ashwini Kumars while the former is done so by Yama. Both these deities were born of Sun (Savitar) and Sanjana (Tvastri): Yama was born of Sanjana when she was in her original (natural) form while Ashwini Kumars were born when the Sun and Sanjana had assumed the forms of a horse and a mare. Vaivasvat Manu, Yama and Yami (or the Yamuna river) who were offspring of the same parents are powerful cosmic powers actively engaged in manifestation. While Ashwini Kumars personifying the generative energy are concerned with animating and the resuscitating the dissolved and dormant souls in the Shoreless Sea of

Immutability, Bharani's Operation under Yama characterizes the stage of manifestation when the animated souls come under the active impulse of the Law of Karma. When these two asterisms fully prepared the emerging egos, they are put under the fiery Krittika for more active role in manifestation and expression of their latent life force.

- (1) *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P. Blavatsky. Madras. Vol. L p. 166
- (2) *ibid* Vol. in. pp 306-7 known as Dharmaraja because he establishes

KRITTIKA (First Quarter)

(26°-40'-30°00')

Krittika takes control of the egos towards the conclusion of Aries: its first quarter lies in Aries but its three subsequent quarters cover the second zodiacal sign Taurus. Agni is its presiding deity. Under its impact the asterism carries the septenary principle of manifestation to Taurus. The seven flames of Agni which under Aries supported the subjectivity of the emerging egos carry them separately to Taurus and lead them there in different streams. While mingling with the Akasic Tattwa considered as the Universal Space in which lies inherent the eternal Ideation of the Universe in its ever changing aspects on planes of matter and objectivity, they adhere to their special ray during their subsequent evolutionary unfoldment. In several spiritual literatures the evolutionary course of the soul is described commencing with Krittika. But the first two asterisms namely Ashwini and Bharani cannot be overlooked as they provide the subjective base on which Krittika begins to unfold its objectifying drama. In spite of its operating still in the realm of subjectivity, Krittika prepares the egos for their expression in the realm of objectivity which begins to occur when they get embedded in the Primordial Substance, Mool Padartha, or the material building blocs of the universe.

The fiery nature of Krittika does not only ensures the divinity in the scintilla to continue and assume different forms of manifestation, it even provides the necessary impetus, initiative, as well the invincible penetrative power which make the ego succeed in their forthcoming task. But fire needed some material base to express itself, which begins with Taurus. Fire has the special qualifications of depending upon some material base so that by igniting it, it could expose its fiery nature but having done so and transforming this base material into nothingness it helps in releasing the divinity embedded in the evolving spark which was united with matter on emerging from its State of pure subjectivity. Krittika links Aries and Taurus, subjective activity and the beginning of creative impulse, which is possible only when subjectivity combines with some objective base. Like every precursor of new exploration, the divine creative impulse represented as the evolving egos also encounters difficulties and to succeed over them, the egos need fiery invincibility to surmount them. This kind of Situation occurs when the evolving entity or the emerging spirit passes from Aries zone to Taurus. When the zodiacal impulses begin to change and the egos come under the influence Taurus, the innocence of the Unborn begins to recede in the background and the divine spirit is covered by a thin coat of materiality. This new Situation produces tremendous agitation, much psychological distress and immense frustration. With such turmoil within and 'non-spiritual or material conditions of terrestrial milieu, Krittika announces the egos to Taurus, the second zodiacal impulse and for a considerable length of initial journey it guides it through Taurus.

TAURUS (Vrishabha)

(30°00'-60°0')

The second zodiacal impulse known as Taurus which includes within its limit three quarters of Krittika, whole of Rohini and half of Mrigashirsa asterisms is universally represented as a bull. The name Taurus comes from the Greek word Taurus meaning Bull. In Vedic astrology, it is known as Vrisha which also means a bull but the word is derived from root-words which imply 'to cover', 'to conceal' as well as 'to grow' and 'to pervade'. But the word Vrisha besides a bull also signifies a pious or meritorious act, the best of the class, the leader of the Community. These connotations very aptly apply to the basic characteristics of the second zodiacal impulse which are well supported by the various asterisms constituting it.

The second zodiac has the supreme function of providing the material base to the emerging divine spark making its manifestation on the physical plane a possibility. The fiery Krittika linked the first two

signs of the zodiac and carried the subjectivity of the dormant ego animated under Aries to the subjective primordial substance, Mool Padartha. Rohini preserved the Life-Essence till its final phase of parturience, and Mrigashirsa enabled it to assume a form for its terrestrial drama. While these asterisms operated at deeper levels, Taurus provided the overall cover, the veil, which concealed the latent spirit nature of the evolving ego; it provided the basic means for the continuance of the evolutionary unfoldment and self-realization.

Under Taurus the pristine nature of the animated divinity, the Atmic Principle in man, is given the initial coat of (subjective) materiality by arousing the thirst to experience the Sensation of its creativity, a reflection of its inherent divine potential. Without the swelling of this impulse, the subsequent manifestation of the divine spark was not possible. *The Book of Dzycm* described the impulse as 'the Mother swells, expanding from within without like the bud of the lotus'. The fire embedded in Arian subjectivity is readied under Taurus to manifest. The Divine Will to fructify can do so only with the support of procreative power without which the subjectivity cannot objectify and the potential cannot be transformed into kinetic energy. The procreative thirst, the impulse to combine with the building blocs of manifestation Mool Padartha, the Primordial Substance, is imparted to evolving egos at the second zodiacal impulse.

Taurus provides the necessary energy for objectification and materialization, which enabled the egos to assume different forms and play various roles in their terrestrial robes and operate at different levels of existence to gain necessary experiences. Taurus introduces differentiation: the spirit and matter become two distinct aspects of manifestation. Under the second zodiacal impulse, the subtlest unit of matter, Akasha, makes coalescence a possibility whereby virginal Sensation is induced to produce multidimensional ripples in the vast expanse of Primordial Matter: it marks the beginning of the manifest consciousness, the initial Naad, the Sound, from which all subsequent sound vibrations are differentiated.

Astrological texts have described Taurus as feminine, earthly, and fixed. These are characteristics of the second zodiacal impulse evident in the world of manifestation; they reveal some of the basic aspects of the sign. The attribute of femininity is used here in a special sense, not in the sense of the sign being passive and merely receptive. Procreation is the sublime and special function of a female; only a female can become a mother and be a vehicle for the continuity of the species. Although the feminine nature is passive and full of warmth, consideration and compassion, only a female can be a vital link in the chain of growth and multiplication without which egoic mission of self-awareness cannot be accomplished. Taurus has the unique significance in this regard; it is at this stage that the journey towards self-realization emerges from the nebulous realm of subjectivity and becomes a possibility for its onward course in the realm of objectivity. Such an assurance is available because of the special feminine quality of Taurus impulse.

Earthiness of Taurus refers to materiality of its efforts and urges. The Hindu Puranas contain many stories describing the refusal of Virgin Ascetics, the sons of Brahma who did not cooperate with him in undertaking the task of generative evolutionary mission; they considered such procreative activities and immersion in materiality as impure acts. But at Taurus, there is transcendence of this Opposition. The egos evolve through their immersion in materiality. At Taurus, the Divine Spark does the very opposite of what the Virgin Ascetics professed. Taurus veils the pristine innocence of the divine spark and provides the robe of darkness. The stage marked the commencement of the path of involution, the *Pravritti Marg*, when the egos themselves began to get entangled in things material. The egos emerging from their dormancy now begin to cast their gaze towards the realm of material existence and the subjective part of their nature begins to fade in oblivion.

The fixity of the sign has reference to its non-commencement of the terrestrial journey; the egos at this stage merely undergo changes in their inner nature, the swelling of emotions, desires, thirst for Sensation, but the first step in the realm of forms, such as duality, and multiplication and Cognition of their fall, has not yet been taken. The potential energy has not yet become kinetic energy.

The rulership of Taurus is assigned to Venus, the planet of Sensation and relationships; Venus is also concerned with preservation of the essential nature of the divine spirit, which is evident in its concern with immortality of the soul. Nonetheless, Venus immerses the egos in materiality in order to provide to them the wisdom underlying the various aspects of manifestation. Sukracharya, the deity personifying the planet did penance for millions of years hanging himself with head downwards

imbibing the smoke of chaff for obtaining Shiva's benediction so as to succeed in accomplishing his mission of objectifying the essential spiritual nature of materiality: to make the Asuras, no-gods, obtain what rightfully belonged to the gods. It is under the influences of Venus that the egos acquire wisdom latent in different forms of life and thereby attain self-awareness. Yama, the presiding deity over Taurus, is the god of death and darkness, which represented the shadowy nature of terrestrial existence. The features of Venus and Yama have been already described in some detail in relation with Bharani, the second asterism, but in the present context their role is primarily in preparing the egos for their terrestrial pilgrimage and their immersion in material sheaths whereby they are enabled to experience physical sensations and acquire self-awareness. The three asterisms namely, Krittika, Rohini and Mrigashirsa under their impulses produced the necessary conditions which endowed the egos various skills and qualities to accomplish their mission.

Krittika endowed fiery enthusiasm to the divine spark animated under Aries and activated in it the urge to procreate, multiply and pervade the universe. The radical changes inculcated under the initial impulse of this asterism prepared the ego to experience a different kind of impulsion under Taurus, which began to veil the pristine subjectivity of the life-essence, and infuse it with primordial building blocs Mool Padartha, which is essential for every form of manifestation. Taurus prepares the egos to plunge in their terrestrial relationships but concretization of the resolve has not yet occurred. Taurus represents recognition of the potential, not the actualization of the resolve. Krittika ignited the fire, aroused the desire to manifest but before the emerging egos involved themselves in such activities they had to be preserved, nourished and guided on their special stream of evolution otherwise there was every possibility of their being lost in the process. The various asterisms constituting the sign are concerned with providing such protective shields.

Taurus, in fact, is the objective counterpart of the subjective Aries although both these signs operate within the broad milieu of subjectivity. The second phase of creative activity and evolutionary journey of the incarnating ego begins under Krittika at which stage it begins to define itself and acquire the necessary wherewithals for its mission. Although the subjectivity begins to objectify at Taurus, there is subtle difference between the two signs: the energy released under Aries is vague while Taurus feels a mission, a direction, an urge to associate with matter. Taurus generates directed passion, purposeful emotional urge and expectation of a result but the goal, direction and the mission are still very unclear. There is certainly an inner impulsion to unite, immerse in matter and acquire the necessary means to actualize and concretize the creative activity; nonetheless the object of these urges is as yet very nebulous. The Situation is similar to the dawn of sexual urges in pre-adolescence. The second sign certainly creates much passion, stormy Situation and whirlwind in the life of the evolving ego but such unsettlement in the subjective frame of the mind is in the State of acquiring a constructive direction. Taurus is symbolized by a bull. In many world religions and ancient rituals this stage is characterized by bull-worship. The reverence for bull in India is signified by Nandi, the bull ascribed to Lord Shiva as his steed and placed at the entrance of every Shiva Temple without whose permission the devotees are not expected to reach the Lord. Nandi is personified as the procreative potential in cosmos and was worshipped by all married ladies desirous of progeny. In the Vedas, the bull was the leader of mankind, and the protector of the Community. As a male counterpart of cow, which in Vedic literature symbolized light, nourishment and divine benediction, Taurus impulse is intimately related with divine effulgence, energy and leadership. Under this impulse, the unborn life-essence in its subjectivity is provided with material base so that it could under suitable milieu manifest itself in an objective form. For this creative aspiration, the ancient civilizations, which valued growth and prosperity, expansion and immortal delight, established the ritual of bull-worship. The bull representing the second zodiacal impulse aroused the desire for enduring happiness, leadership among the people and multiplication of one's tribe. At this stage, the Mool Prakriti or the Primordial Essence was brought in manifestation so as to provide the necessary sustenance and power to assume different forms. Taurus prepared the egos in subjectivity for their terrestrial journey and provided them with those material building-blocs which were necessary for their expression and exposure at different levels of manifestation; while preserving their pristine nature it prepared them to operate at the most material or the physical realms of existence. The Taurus impulse was still in the realm of subjectivity related with aspiration, thirsts and potentials for procreation and multiplication. In this task, Taurus was effectively supported by the three asterisms operating within its extension.

KRITTIKA (Contd.)

(26°40' - 40°00')

The subjectivity of the egos receives a radical orientation when they enter into the zone of Krittika. They begin to look beyond themselves. The fiery impact reflecting the solar flare latent in them begins to manifest as an overpowering urge to manifest, play an active role in the phenomenal world and to experience the thrill of creation. Krittika presided over by the fire-god Agni is highly explosive and surcharged with cosmic electricity. It produced lightning and thunder during its descent to denser layers of manifestation pervaded by Mool Padartha, the Parabrahmanic root, which represented the abstract deific feminine principle. The asterism played a supreme role in evolving mankind. It provided a distinct departure from the Arian nebulous, abstract, subjectivity enabling the egos to differentiate from the eternal Sea of Immutability. Krittika under the planetary rulership of Sun and superintendence of fire-god Agni made a well identified departure from this State and engendered a new impulse which induced the ego to desire objective manifestation for itself. The very name Krittika for the new impulse is derived from the Sanskrit root-word which means 'to create', 'to engender', 'to divide and more especially to make a person or thing to be what it was not previously. The last attribute of the word is very significant which emphasized the significant departure in the egoic development at this stage. The special creative nature of Krittika in spite of its turbulence, hardships and differentiation arises from this special mystic influence of the impulse and its relationship with Nada (pronounced Naada) the cosmic sound which arises during its course of its descent to various different layers of materialization and differentiations.

Blavatsky also mentioned "the Pleiades, as we all know, are the seven stars beyond the Bull which appear at the beginning of Spring. They have very occult meaning in the Eastern Philosophy and are connected with sound and other mystic principles of Nature"¹. I.K. Taimini explained the relevance of Sound emitted at this stage further when he indicated that the vibrations released under Krittika had immense potential for differentiation and creation because they arose from Akasha which was at their back and were hidden within it

(1) *The Secret Doctrine*, op. cit., Vol. II., p. 374

but this Akasha itself was either consciousness itself or was an expression of it. "But consciousness alone can produce out of itself any amount of energy"². When the egos were revived to sentience from their dormancy in the everlasting Sea of Immutability, it was the vivification of their latent consciousness and at Krittika stage this consciousness was activated leading to infinite variety of differentiation. The vibratory impulses which aroused Akasha, Agni, Mool, Padartha were all different aspects of Divine Consciousness arising at various stages of their reawakening and vivification. At Krittika, the powerful emission of energy in the form of Nada, Sound, takes place which expressed the Will of the Divine Consciousness in its manifestative differentiating aspect.

The ego which had remained so far in the State of subjectivity and undefined nebulous State under the new impetus feels attracted towards phenomenal existence. The cosmic sound which impelled it towards differentiation and to separate itself from the universal mass of sentience was not the ordinary Vibration which affects our ears. It includes all kinds of vibrations found in Nature. Their essential nature is to transmit energy through space without involving any forward movement of the medium through which the transmission takes place. Acting on the egoic consciousness and moving towards its goal of self-realization, it affected its mentation; the ego was now no longer content in its subjective placidity. It wanted a change. The sound Vibration swept the egos forward on their evolutionary journey without disturbing its own cosmic character. This Situation was analogous to the Biblical reference of "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God". Word, sound, Nada, or the intense creative vibrations were all linked with Krittika which carried forward the Divine Consciousness and made the egos assume different well-defined forms.

Krittika represented the urge towards externalization. It leads to differentiation into numerous tones and subtones of sound which sometimes result in the fragmentation of the solar spark into innumerable well defined energy particles blazing in different forms in Nature. Krittika crystallized the central nuclei which involved themselves in the evolutionary cycle. Krittika for this reason was considered the starting point of the evolutionary cycle. It did not only

(2) *Man, God and the Universe*. I.K. Taimini. Madras, p. 203

induce the egos to move towards their procreative physical activities it also laid down the septenary principle in man and gave the egos so much momentum as to ultimately reach their point of origin once

again. The Vedas* began their invocation of Nakshatras with Krittika. Even H.P. Blavatsky considered Krittika as the central fulcrum of the evolutionary process. She stated that "the Pleiades are the central group of the system of sidereal symbology. They are situated in the neck of the constellation Taurus, regarded by Madler and others, in astronomy as the central group of the System of the Milky Way, and in the Kabalah and Eastern Esotericism, as the Sidereal Septenate born of the first manifested side of the upper the concealed. This manifested side is Taurus, the symbol of ONE (the figure 1) or the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, Alpha "the bull"¹ or "ox" whose synthesis is Ten (10) or Yod, the perfect letter and number! She further explained that "the Pleiades (Alcyone especially) are thus considered even in astronomy as the central point around which our universe of fixed stars revolves, the focus from which, and into which, the Divine Breath or Motion, works incessantly during the Manavantars⁵⁵¹. H.P. Blavatsky even attributed Krittika to be intimately connected with the very life-force which enlivens human beings for the Divine Breath in Hindu metaphysics is considered as the Prana Shakti, the life-energy which is responsible for making an individual alive.

The beginning of sentient existence is cataclysmic: it is so both at the phenomenal plane of manifestation as well as at the inner subjective level. The planetary ownership of the four quarters of Krittika reveals the turbulence experienced in the process. Saturn ruled over the second and the third quarters of the asterism. Saturn created a barrier to solar effulgence beaming its radiance in noumenal existence and by putting a barrier to this flow of creative light, which dispelled darkness and destroyed material obscurities, Saturn helped in concretizing and non-etherealising the solar flare. By this process, Saturn immersed the non-discernible, imperceptible, invincible and invisible radiation in Mool Padartha, the primordial substance, and thereby begun to make the phenomenal existence for man a possibility. In the long sequence

(*) Krittika-Jyestha Axis divided the evolutionary cycle in two sections, the first Krittika-Jyestha signified the egoic immersion in matter, while the second portion namely Jyestha-Krittika led to the retrieval of the Spirit from the thralldom of Matter.

(1) *The Secret Doctrine** op. cit.. Vol. IV.. p. 121.

of human evolution, it is stated that the first stock of human race called as Root-race in occult literature was Polarian with very indistinct features; it was only with the second Root-race known as the Hyperborean that some kind of form emerged though it was yet very nebulous¹. Saturn's planetary ownership over the two quarters of Krittika began providing such concretizing impulses, which coalesced the plastic matter within which some traces of consciousness could be evident.

The solar radiance in its role as Agni functioned as its three sons namely Pavaka, Pavamana and Suchi and vivified the physical, psychic and spiritual portions of man. Such a creative role of the Krittika impulse involved projection of illusory sheaths, mayavic avarana, which greatly restricted the limitless freedom of the egoic consciousness experienced so far. The Saturnian coats of materiality over the noumenal consciousness began to cast their shadows. The 'destructive creative nature' of Krittika began spreading the veil of shadow over the emerging spirit; the veiled consciousness remained irradiated within the material coat which continued pushing it inward so as to coalesce, coagulate with sensorious physical atoms and thereby it altered the physical nature of man. In spite of this coat of materiality, the inner spirit under the impact of Jupiterian impulse induced it to preserve the momentum to continue up to the very end of the journey The Sun which ruled over the asterism as a whole provided warmth, initiative, and strength; it inculcated the seer-will among the emerging egos; it aroused the instinct to fight and to carve out a niche for itself. The descent of the new impulse though explosive during its initial stages produced as a result of the inherent retroversion sufficient energy for their ascent, for the arousal of introspective faculties, sentience in consciousness, and for the voluntary direction of seer-will and ultimate arrival to their source of differentiation. All these evolutionary impulses in the potential State were imparted in nucleus form at this stage. An important phase of egoic unfoldment at this stage is the

'1) See, *The Evolution o/Man*, J. Emile Marcault and Iwan A. Hawliczek, London, Chapter VI, wherein the following excerpts appear for the First Root Race:

Huge, filamentous, sexless, empty shadows floating about in the dense atmosphere and in seething seas. They sway and drift about, huge, indefinite, protista-like forms in ethereal matter, with changing outline ... {*The Pedigree o/Man*, A. Besant) And further it stated: In its form the second race itself did not differ very greatly from the preceding type, save that it was marked by a considerable densification and. in consequence, a greater stability. (p.32)

vivification of the septenary principle of human development. It occurs in two ways: one, the entire flow of egos emerging from the State of dormancy is differentiated in seven Channels according to the special ray on which their soul, the inner-essence, has been evolving for aeons; and second, each individual ego during the course of its terrestrial journey has to evolve, develop and mature its seven principles constituting its whole being. The seven aspects of the evolving scintilla were alluded earlier in relation with Ashwini. Much explicit reference to these aspects of manifestation was made in the Vedas while describing the Sapta Sindhu, the seven rivers. The seven Channels of human development assumed marked importance at Krittika stage, as it was the beginning of well-defined differentiation and the beginning of the journey towards objectification. The very name Krittika signifying the fourth stellar impulsion owes its origin to the seven Krittika sisters who were the seven wives of Sapta-rishis, the seven regents of cosmic evolution silently watching the regulated progress of the Divine Plan. H. P. Blavatsky described them as the seven ancient Rishis (to whom Krittika sisters were married) - the progenitors of all that lives and breathes on Earth - are the seven friends of Agni, his seven "Horses" or seven "Heads"¹. As the seven feminine creative counterparts of these Rishis, the Krittika sisters have the task of generating the necessary milieu for the fulfillment of the task of these Rishis. The Puranic stories have described the role of these sisters in several ways. According to one such stories these sisters supported the creative plan in-suppressing the anti-evolutionary force represented by Tarkasura. They preserved and nourished the semen-virile of Lord Shiva which was transformed into Badwanala, the submarine fire, and deposited in the Ganges for cooling; when the appropriate time for parturition arrived, the six-headed Kartikeya, the seventh head representing the Atmic Principle ever remained at the noumenal plane was delivered of these sisters. Kartikeya, the presiding deity of Mars, destroyed the mighty demon Tarkasura and made the world a safe place for the gods. Such stories refer to the close relationship between Krittika and the continuance of the septenary principle or the seven Channels of egoic development while leading the emerging egos on their seven well-identified streams and developing the seven faculties in them. Krittika

(1) *the Secret Doctrine*, op. cit, Vol. IV, p. 177

illumined their mind, enlightened their path and aroused seer-will to meet effectively the hurdles on their way. The seven flames of Agni emerging as the septenary principle in man link the terrestrial human beings (Saturn) with the highest Atmic Consciousness in him (Sun): the Seven Principles in man provide the foundation for his psycho-mental-spiritual consciousness which ultimately leads him to full integration of his personality and the acme of self-realization. The ancient seers who revealed the nature of Krittika knew very well the difficulties of human struggle in accomplishing the destined mission for which this asterism laid the foundation. It was for this reason that they symbolized it with a razor. The razor's edge is a very ancient symbol. It referred to the difficulties in human struggle to attain self-knowledge. In Kathopanishad mention of it has been made in an important way. This Upanishad deals with a conversation between Nachiketa and Yama (the presiding deity over Taurus). During the course of his enquiry Nachiketa desired to know the secret of life and death from Yama when the latter explained to him the essentials of manifestation and finally revealed to him that the discriminating individuals collected their external organs of sense-perception into the central cavity of their heart followed by absorption of their enlightened form in intelligence; later on the Buddhic consciousness is directed towards Mahat Tattwa and one's whole being is established in Atma. Having thus indicated the task before the young soul, Yama exhorted Nachiketa to arise, awake and proceed towards their Revered Ancestors and obtain Wisdom. But he warned him that this path of self-realization is as difficult as "treading on the razor's edge". In other words, though the knowledge of the task ahead and the necessary wherewithals for the same were implanted by Krittika in the divine soul in its noumenal State in its subjectivity, the actualization of the goal for which it has to continue its further journey was full of pitfalls and difficult trials. Krittika warns that mere visualization of the goal and the course of self-unfoldment and self knowledge was not sufficient. The success in the perilous journey on which the young ego is likely to embark soon would depend upon himself and upon overcoming the ordeals which he is ready to undergo which could be comparable with treading the path on the razor's edge. The path unfolded by Krittika could be successfully completed only on the basis of psychological preparations made and one-pointed devotion to it. Before the ego takes its first step in the phenomenal world much arduous preparations, appropriate nourishment and guidance are needed. Rohini provided the necessary nourishment and support.

ROHINI

(40°00'-53°20')

Still under the general influence of Taurus, the ego at the next phase of its evolutionary journey received much intensive care under Rohini and it was made much more attuned to cosmic vibrations. The ego had already received the male creative principle or the Shiva Tattwa, the feminine preservative principle or the Shakti Tattwa and the cosmic electricity or the Fohat under the three previous asterisms, but it had still to overcome its nebulous fluidity, acquire the power to vibrate in harmony with the cosmic rhythm and develop the seer-will which could enable it to objectify in the realm of matter. The ego received such support under Rohini.

The indwelling solar flare which vivified the living forms acts in the form of energy running in their different sinews; the rosy hue of the early morning, the crimson leaves of young plants and the life-giving blood in human veins essential for their life and growth reflect the further differentiation and support provided by the fiery Krittika. Rohini represented the further transformation of the subjectivity into objectivity, the spread and preservation of Spirit over matter. Rohini operated in an important manner in transforming the Krittika impulse in more spectacular principles of life. It received the Superconscious, the thought of the Logos for objectification and began transforming the latent potential into One Reality, the indwelling Spirit in material form. The divine scintilla handed over to Rohini contained within it all the potential of divine splendour - the celestial delight, logic puissance and the solar effulgence - but it needed appropriate culture of these. Rohini was engaged in stabilizing the various transformations taking place at this stage: The seers making obeisance to Rohini, the red-coloured mistress of Rohita who made firm the heaven and earth invoked her as "the one who with her divine elixir provide the foundation for the descent of light, power and happiness". This was the momentous task accomplished by Rohini. H. P. Blavatsky considered her as "the divine Spirit of Life ever coalescing with Matter". In discharging such functions Rohini revealed herself as the Will of the Deity that acts: this seer-will, acts like the divine impetus throughout the evolutionary journey of the ego which infused the Krittika-fire in the primordial substance, Mool Padartha, and activated it to proceed further.

The various transformations occurring at Rohini stage were importantly suggested in its very nomenclature. The word Rohini is derived from the root-word 'Roh' which implies anything that rises from smaller to higher number, that which goes to mountainous height or that which grows or blossoms from bud to a flower. The Rohini impulse leads to spectacular growth, expansion and fructification. It transforms the scintilla of egoic consciousness into multi-cellular, 'multi-dimensional energy with unrestricted thirst to expand and experience. Rohini itself is a female form of 'Roh'⁵ representing that which blossoms from bud to a flower, a reference to procreative potential, Rohini stands for the feminine urge to blossom, to ascend to shed light and to provide nourishment. Rohini means the cow but a cow in Vedic literature means the hidden rays of the dawn or of the Sun; it also stands for the power that sustains creation. The most substantive meaning of the Sanskrit word Rohini means a maiden in whom menstruation has commenced but who has not so far been married and become a mother'.

The naming of the fourth asterism as Rohini suggests the immensity of the egoic potential evolving from its dormancy and imbibing the various essentials for unfolding its latent splendor. The plastic nature of the ego is nourished and protected by Rohini but its creativity is still contained within its inner nature. Rohini cared for its growth but did not marry it fully with matter to be productive. It implanted in the ego the will to externalize but it did not let the Germ to be off loaded till it was fully matured. The close association between Rohini and Moon* showed that Moon acted as an accoucheur, an agency on behalf of solar radiance to regenerate life on earth and to-energize the manifestative process. The egoic consciousness at this stage was bestowed with several special qualities by Moon and Rohini, which could smoothen the process of self-unfoldment and self-realization. The most important contribution of Moon at this stage was the bestowal of the capacity of rhythmic fluctuation in tune with periodicity principle in Nature. The egos become capable of rhythmic

(*) In Hindu mythological stories, Rohini is described as the most beloved wife of Moon.

vibrations under active functioning of sense-organs and emotional nature Under Taurus they developed the Sensation as well as emotion, the latter as an outcome of the basic impulses of attraction and repulsion which are primarily aroused by Rohini under its lunar impetus. Moon vitally affected the emotional nature in man. Rohini being an expression of feminine principle in Nature, Rohini and Moon

together lay down as accompaniment to procreative urges, the condition of periodicity in its various forms. As a further ramification of the principle of the Septenary principle in Nature, Rohini covered the entire manifestation in various permutations and combinations of the septennial periodisation, the impact of which is indeed very pervasive. Quoting an earlier scientist H. P. Blavatsky described it very graphically when she mentioned that the feminine physiological phenomenon is related with lunar month of 28 days of 4 weeks of 7 days each so that in 13 such occurrences take place in 364 days which is the solar week year of 52 weeks of 7 days each. The quickening of the foetus is marked by a period of 126 days or 18 weeks of 7 days each.

That period which is called the period of viability is one of 210 days or 30 weeks of 7 days each. The period of parturition is accomplished in 280 days or a period of 40 weeks of 7 days each or 10 lunar months of 28 days each. H.P. Blavatsky further stated that the birth, growth, maturity, vital functioning, healthy revolutions of change, diseases, decay and death of insects, reptiles, fishes, birds, mammals, and even of man are more or less controlled by a law of completion in weeks¹. But the period of a week which could be considered basic construction-bloc of procreative periodisation in Nature is related with the changing phases of Moon, The 28 days period of Moon's revolution round the zodiacal belt is divided into bright and dark formations, each of which comprises its waxing and waning phases of seven days each (each day of which is related with one of the seven planets). The week as the unit of creative phenomenon in universe is very closely connected with all creative activities on this earth and it operates as the psycho-physical background of all human activities². Even in yogic meditational practices the importance of this basic division of time is

(1) *The Secret Doctrine*, op. cit, Vol. IV, p. 193

(2) *Ibid.*, Vol. II., pp 104-5, and Vol. IV., p. 193

great. The relationship between Moon around which the time-unit revolves and Rohini which infuses in the emerging egos the faculty of harmonization, between the procreative faculties in Nature and the universal creative flux, is very close. The interlinking of the law of periodicity and the septennial impulse in Nature is a very important contribution of the fourth asterism which makes an enduring impact on the creative potential of the egos in their evolutionary journey.

Another important feature of the emerging nuclei of life-essence, the soul or the ego, at this stage is the deepening of the will to create. While the various asterisms had been providing and strengthening the different qualities necessary for manifestative task before the egos, Rohini accentuated the will to create rather than the faculty to create. This characteristic of Rohini is evident from the assignment of Brahma as its presiding deity. The Supreme Being considered as Brahma is both the efficient and the material cause of the visible universe, the essence from which all created things are produced and into which they are finally absorbed. The four heads of Brahma in Hindu mythology suggested the four boundaries of the physical universe; it also represented the lower quaternaries representing the physical man (*) which emphasized that the Rohini was intimately connected with will to spread out and multiply in the realm of objective universe (which is the mission of Brahma). At this stage, the Supreme Being aroused the seer-will in the egos to be creative on the physical plane of existence and this creative process involved involuntary or the instinctive faculty of the inner being to evolve the subjective essence into objective atoms or the cosmic matter to be later on developed into various forms. Rohini functioned as the vortex of creative impulses where diverse creative faculties, manifestative principles and the invincible eternal motion radically oriented the egos and hurled them towards their future destiny.

The superintendence of Brahma over Rohini impulse has also another significance. Brahma is only instrumental in creation and not the prime cause. He intensified the will to create but the prime cause of the will to create originated much earlier. H. P. Blavatsky emphasized this feature of Brahma when she mentioned that "Brahma,

(*) Lower Quaternary comprised the physical body, the Vital Airs (Prana) vitalising the body, emotional sheath and the mental stuff which are considered the transient portion of man which are left behind with every physical death.

the four-faced god, who after lifting the earth out of the water, accomplished the creation, is held to be only the instrumental, and not, as clearly implied, the Ideal Cause. No orientalist, so far, seems to have

thoroughly comprehended the real sense of the verses in the Puranas that treat of "creation". Therein Brahma is the cause of the potential that are to be generated subsequently for the work of "creation"¹.

Clarifying the role of Brahma as an instrumentality, Blavatsky stated that "Brahma, the emanation of the Primordial Ray, ... is made to serve as a Vahan or vehicle of the Divine Ray, which otherwise could not manifest itself in the universe"². She emphasized that Brahma was constantly "moved by the desire to create", (and every predictive astrologer is aware of the immense desire to (pro) create, rather than actualization of this desire that characterises Rohini). In the Vedas, it is not Brahma who creates but the Prajapatis. This clarification relating the Brahma pointed powerfully to the unity between the creative desire aroused by Rohini over which Brahma presided, the evolutionary principles imposed by Moon which inculcated the law of periodicity and the septenary principle of manifestation and the Primordial Ray emanating from Sun which is the source of all creation. All of these taken together formed the procreative potential which under suitable conditions manifested into numerous forms.

A chariot as a symbol of Rohini very succinctly summarizes its main characteristics. A chariot transports the royal dignitaries on their mission. The very word Rohini as indicated earlier, meant "a maiden in whom menstruation has commenced but has not so far been married and become a mother". Rohini is a 'a red cow' which can nourish and be a source of light and power. These are necessary preparations for an important mission. The chariot in the present context also highlights the regal nature of the egos entrusted by Krittika to Rohini who under the experienced "accoucheur" (Moon) preserved and nourished them till the necessary conditions for their externalization in the forms designed by Brahma arrived. The chariot symbolizing Rohini contains within itself the solar radiance received

(1) *The secret Doctrine*, op. cit. Vol. I., p. 125

(2) Ibid p. 146

by Krittika, infuses it with the basic evolutionary principles under which they could blossom, arouses the magnetic responses in the cosmic electricity and leads the egos to Mrigashirsa but still under the influence of Taurus for their externalization in the realm of physical manifestation. Rohini prepared the noumenal egos for their phenomenal manifestation.

MRIGASHIRSA

(53°20'-66°40')

Mrigashirsa transforms the psychological thirst for sensuous experiences into their actual fulfillment. This process gradually takes the egos from Taurus to Gemini. During this transition, the planetary rulership of Moon over Rohini changes to Mars over Mrigashirsa. The basic impetus of Mars is to externalise latent potential. Sun and Mercury which ruled over the first two quarters of Mrigashirsa are active primarily on the mental plane concerned much more with consciousness aspect of manifestation rather than on physical aspect of life. When Mrigashirsa enters into Gemini, Venus and Mars take over the rulership of third and fourth quarters of the asterism and the ego at that stage begins to have its experiences of the objective plane. The ego now begins to act more decisively on the physical plane.

The capacity to experience sensations was inculcated at Rohini as a result of Tanmatras* followed by the emergence of sense-organs such as eyes, nose, tongue, and skin at Mrigashirsa. At this stage the thirst for sensuous experiences could be expressed; the egos now possessed the capacity to do so. The subjective urge could now be turned into physical cravings; the egos now acquired the specific sense-organs to experience these sensations. The egos now received the requisite instruments to satisfy their cravings. Mrigashirsa even strengthened their Submission to the Law of Periodicity and they became subject to the cycle of births and deaths.

The occult literature has often spoken of Polarian and Hyperborean races which were nebulous and cloud-like formations. The egos evolving under those conditions were without any distinct identity. But at Mrigashirsa, the emergence of the Lemurians, the Third Root Race became possible. They could be associated with well-formed human beings, which had several material sheaths through which the different Principles could function. The subjective nature of their being began to be veiled with different sheaths which restricted their capacity to experience as well as the freedom of their expression. The plastic nature of their experience received a radical change.

The desire to experience sensuous delight felt under the early

(*) Tanmatras are such sensations as smell taste, sight touch and hearing.

phase of Mrigashirsa stirred the psyche of the individual; there was much internal agitation and movements. The individual experienced fantasies of various kinds: there was little difference between fantasies and dreams. A kind of unreality surrounded the egos. Rohini was receptive: the descent of Logoic electricity, the Fohat, was received and absorbed. When Mrigashirsa began to operate, the consciousness was directed towards a new sphere of vibrations and a new way of life. The physical life became much more important than the psychological and the spiritual one but the nature of this physical existence was still much more ethereal than what we have presently.

The Hindu scriptures described Mrigashirsa as the asterism under which Uma-Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva, and a daughter of Himavata - the highest mountain ever clad with snow, was born as well as married to the Lord as a result of which Kartikeya who freed the world from the ravages of Taraka demon was born. Such allusions referred to the descent of pure consciousness operating as universal feminine Mother Principle uniting with creative Male Principle, the Purusha Tattwa in Nature, and removing hurdles for the advent of growth and expansion of different life-forms. Mrigashirsa leads to radical transformation when ethereal consciousness began to evolve in physical forms; the subjective atoms began to assume the nature of objective forms. Mrigashirsa does not show gradualness. Qualitative metamorphosis occurs under this asterism. From abstraction to concretization, and from universal to differentiated and personalized energy-nuclei take place at this stage. It is like the leap of an antelope, from the secured ground (Taurus) to the unknown airy space (Gemini). At Mrigashirsa, divine influx involuntarily pushes the ego to a new realm of personal experiences. The metamorphosis is evident when Mrigashirsa occupies Gemini; there the primeval innocence and pristine purity of consciousness begin to give way to complicated mind-born anticipations and conflicts. The life-essence is now polarised. A new self-generative process begins to operate. It severs the evolving ego from its divine source and makes its life more terrestrial.

GEMINI (Mithuna)

(60°00' - 90°00')

Gemini known as Mithuna in Vedic Astrology organizes in a coherent and meaningful wholeness the creative potential aroused under Taurus. Tanmatras the rudiments of elements devoid of quality (e.g. smell without the quality smelt) could express themselves only with *Indriyas* or the various sense and action organs, which for their direction needed supervision from the mind-principle, the *Mahat* or the universal intelligence and consciousness. Mahat produced the awareness of I-am-I. This sense of separateness is expressed by Gemini.

The mind-set, which arises under Gemini, is invariably associated with a sense of duality. The mind-principle, which directed the sense and action organs, the *Jnana* and *Karma-Indriyas*, to interact with everyday conditions of life, operates under conditions of duality. It is often expressed as the inner and the outer consciousness. The mind-principle contains within itself the polarization of Spirit and Matter, the two aspects of Life in its wholeness.

Gemini requires limitless expanse, an open horizon vibrant with life-breath, Prana, for its expression and extension. Only in such airy vastness can manifestation in its physical form take place where intellect could operate unhindered. The Vedic deity Pavana which is another name of Vayu, the wind-god, presided over the sign. But the word Pavana also meant 'a sieve' or 'a strainer' which separated the chaff from the corn. Gemini also separates the outer or the physical intelligence from inner consciousness which works from within.

Gemini leads to differentiation and polarisation. The unity of the egos is destroyed and they are now beset with contrariety such as males and females, life and death, awakening and sleep. These are polarised aspects of the same unity called Life, yet they are different although related with their opposites. The ancient seers represented this duality by a male and a female holding hands and Standing together, one having a mace and another a harp. This graphic description symbolized the opposites. They are attracted to each other, yet they stand separate, independent. They are different from their opposites yet they complement each other. The mace represented power while harp referred to delight. The fusion of such opposites leads to procreative phase of manifestation. This differentiation in two complementary opposites which destroyed the primeval unity of the egos was mythically represented by Brahma separating himself into Brahma-Viraj (Male) and Vach-Viraj (Female). Brahma

did so for initiating the process of procreative generation. It was necessary because the Ascetic Kumars namely Sanaka, Sanandan, Sanatana, Sanat Kumar and others had refused to participate in this form of manifestation considering it unholy. The beginning of manifestation at the physical plane commencing with physical intelligence was marked by sex-differentiation and duality principle operating through the egos. This cosmic drama of sex-differentiation began under the Gemini impulse. Those who operated at higher levels of spiritual and psychological planes of existence are ineffective to function at the physical level.

HP. Blavatsky referred to this Situation in connection with formation of the Third Root Race. From thence onward, she stated, a-sexual humanity became distinctly hermaphrodite or bi-sexual; and finally the man-bearing Eggs began to give birth, gradually and almost imperceptibly in their evolutionary development, first to beings in which one sex predominated over the other, and finally to distinct man and woman¹. During the course of Gemini impulse, the self-contained androgynous human beings become bi-sexual with Separation of the male from the female. The Separation between the two creative principles in Nature led the egos which so far had been operating as a unit at non-physical level to self-propagating material form. This stage is often described as the Fall of Angels or the immersion of Pure Beings into (impure, unholy) generative existence. The Hindu scriptures alluded to the phenomena several times when they described stories of Budha (Mercury) marrying Ila/Ida who changed his/her sex several times.

Gemini is ruled by Mercury which is full of mystic allusions. Mercury was born as a result of tension between Jupiter and Soma (Moon) when the latter eloped with the former's wife Tara and seduced her. It was followed by a war between the gods and demons, even the gods were divided on the two sides. Brahma intervened to arrange for an amicable settlement and for Tara's return to her lawful husband. When Mercury was born, Tara was reluctant to reveal his parentage,

(1) *The Secret Doctrine*, op. cit.. Vol. 111.. p. 141

but later, when Moon was found to be the father, Jupiter refused to accept Mercury but the child turned out to be so graceful that Jupiter adopted him as his own son. The child was so intelligent that Brahma named it Budha which meant he who is wise and intelligent. The lordship of Gemini to this planet emphasized the development of mind-principle, the intelligence which directed egoic involuntary evolution to selecting a course according to its own judgment. The duality aroused at this stage also inculcated in the egos marked swing from one end to another, from spiritual delight (represented by Soma, the god of celestial nectar) to exoteric rituals guided by Jupiter.

Mercury is very creative in the realm of thought and ideas. Mind has tremendous power to influence realignment of mental-stuff. It bestowed much intelligence to egos which gave them new impetus to work on the physical plane. The development of mind enabled them to produce forms on the objective plane. The mind creates forms. The egos with developed mind could produce different forms and situations which increased complications of the life around them. The beginning of *avidya*, spiritual ignorance, was a new feature of this phase of development. The activation of Mercurial mind-principle led to deeper immersion in materiality and preclusion from spiritual awareness. The Divine Egos now became oblivious of their lineage. But Mercury has the power to revive the memory of its primeval past which gave them much hope as well.

Gemini is characterised by Polarisation of opposites forces in Nature. It resulted in the emergence of man and woman as sexually distinct entities. This differentiation finally led them to copulative procreative process. It began a tempestuous phase of manifestation. H.R Blavatsky described it with much details when she spoke of the emergency of the Lemurian Root Race. She stated that the war in heaven also referred to the evolution of the intellectual principle in mankind¹. The juxtaposition of the two momentous events at the Gemini stage namely, the differentiation of the sexes and the evolution of the intellectual principle led to physiological transformations in an important manner. It was also associated with changes in the psychological State of the being. As a result of the relationship between the physical and the inner consciousness, the egos acquired distinct

(1) Transaction of the Blavatsky Lodge, Los Angeles, Cai. p. 110

complex and multi-dimensional characteristics. Referring to the importance of this stage of human development and its place in the overall scheme of evolution, Blavatsky mentioned that "the Tree has seven branches: three on the man's side, four on that of the female. These branches are typical of the seven Root Races, in the third of which, at its very close, occurred the Separation of the sexes and the so-called fall into generation. The three earliest Races were sexless, then hermaphrodite; the other four, male and female, as distinct from each other"¹.

In ancient Indian scriptures references have been made of the marriage of Ila/Ida with Mercury, the ruler of the Gemini sign. But Ila is a mystical character, which was variously mentioned in the scriptures. She was sometimes mentioned in the male form and sometimes in the form of a female. Mercury married Ila who was a daughter of Manu Vaivasvata. But Manu had wanted a son for which offerings were made. But the officiating priest mismanaged the rites as a result of which a daughter was born to Manu. Through the favour of the two deities to whom the offering was made for the son, the sex of Ila was however, changed and she became a man. His sex was once again changed due to his trespassing on a grove sacred to Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva. Ila was once again made into a female but on the supplication and prayers of Ila's friends, Shiva and Parvati conceded that Ila be made male for a month and a female for the next. The various changes in the sex of Ila who was the means through which Mercury expressed his creative potential indicated the dual or the polarised qualities even of the planet itself. The mankind at this stage was polarised but within it was the potential for both the masculine as well as the feminine creative faculties. Mercury was the creative energy, which could mingle effectively with positive as well as negative powers. At this stage, the Moon reflected the cosmic design of polarised evolution, which occurs under copulative procreation. This process for its furtherance inevitably required intensification of physical forms.

Mercury's marriage with the mystic Ila reveals the unique planetary influence impinging on the egos, which at this stage enabled them to acquire diverse psychological faculties. These attributes helped them to meet effectively the ordeals of their forthcoming pilgrimage.

(1) *The Secret Doctrine*, op. cit. Vol. III., p. 112

During the early beginning of the Third Root Race, psychic and physical intellect were dormant and consciousness still undeveloped, its spiritual conceptions were quite unconnected with its physical surroundings; it was known that the divine man dwelt in his animal - though externally human form; if there was instinct in him, no self-consciousness came to enlighten the darkness of the latent human intellect, the mind principle. During the Gemini phase of egoic development, the physical form contained within it the divine being in its pristine nature but it was clothed in animal instinct and the self-consciousness based on development of higher understanding and mental development was lacking. For this development, the egos had to wait till the influx of Cancer impulse. At Gemini stage, the flow of two distinct polarised streams of consciousness, one of the inner or the spiritual plane which was much veiled and unable to manifest so far, and another on the physical or animal form which worked actively on the terrestrial plane and made the Gemini impulse quite stormy, confronted the evolving egos with opposing forces. It even intensified the duality in the nature of Gemini. Ever since the egos became personalized and began functioning with separate consciousness of their own, they at first developed animal instincts though they had become human in form (under Mrigashirsa) which developed temptations as their evolutionary impetus. The division of sexes, the changing mode of procreation and the arousal of human intellect, which failed to establish close relationship with their higher mind, Buddhi, which imparts intuitive understanding of the divinity hidden within the physical form, created much differentiation, polarization and complication in the structure of the thinking network. Numerically Gemini characterized the number 2 which represented the emergence of duality, but connected with this idea were numerous other ramifications which made the understanding of the nature of this sign very difficult. The three asterisms namely, the two quarters of Mrigashirsa, the whole of Ardra, and the three quarters of Punarvasu covered the wide range of transformations that took place under this sign and all of them appropriately added to the growing complications of the human life.

MRIGASHIRSA (Contd.)

(53°20' - 66°40')

Mrigashirsa, as mentioned earlier, lies half in Taurus and half in Gemini. Taurus comprised the potentials of creative energy while Gemini led to externalisation of those faculties. Mrigashirsa represented the struggling impetus to materialise and express itself. The first two quarters of Mrigashirsa under Sun and Mercury, which occupied Taurus, created internal psychological restlessness and desire to extend its scope of Sensation. The urge became objectively palpable only in Gemini. On its polarisation and its basic unity destroyed, the duality expressed itself as animal passion. The symbol of Mrigashirsa is the head of an antelope whereas Ardra, the succeeding asterism, is symbolized by a human head, (another symbol for it is a shining precious stone representing the scintilla hidden under the outer sheath). Mrigashirsa arouses animal passion, the urge for physical Sensation and instinctive responses to it. At a latter stage, the experiences thus gained led to

intelligence, which manifested the intricacies of human nature. Ardra occupied the central portion of Gemini; the qualities issuing from this asterism inculcated the human qualities. Ardra exposes the latent mind-principle while Mrigashirsa is related with emotional nature of the being. Mrigashirsa means the head of an antelope (Mriga = antelope; shirsa = head). Its presiding deity is Soma, the presiding deity over Moon or the Moon itself. The name of the asterism seems to be deliberately chosen so as to deflect the attention of superficial students from its deeper characteristics. The main function of Moon is to reflect the solar rays and to make its radiance bearable and to transform it as beneficent influence. It is only with the Intervention of Moon that the Sun's rays are changed into warmth, heat and nourishment needed for the growth and diffusion of herbs, plants, animals and human beings. Moon receives the solar influence like a chalice, transmutes its highly explosive impact as if in a reactor, converts the descent of superconscious into beneficent evolutionary impetus and functions like the cosmic protective Mother. The final result of lunar impulse is very cool and lovely from outside while inside the various transformative activities make the asterism very volatile. Any new transformation, any new creation, or the birth of any living entity is a highly tortuous process. Mrigashirsa is concerned with manifestation of divine energy in different forms. The regency of Soma over the asterism leads to Instillation of the solar spark, the scintilla to the inner core of the ego, externally however, only the animal instinct is perceived. Only a discerning seer could perceive the divine spark functioning within the outer animal form.

The rulership of Mars over the asterism accentuates its role in externalizing the inner spirit instilled in the physical form. It may be relevant here to note that the skin of an antelope is used during meditation to sit upon it and establish deliberate link with one's inner spirit. Mars is always active in bringing the inner effulgence to the surface, which at times occurs, in the form of emotional reactions and at times by way of intellectual understanding of one's inner nature. The third and fourth quarters of Mrigashirsa, which extended into Gemini, are ruled by Venus and Mars, which further added to this externalization process.

The emerging egos at this stage are more concerned with their animal passion rather than with their mind-principle. But this animal passion is of a special kind; the animal chosen to represent the asterism is not a cow or a horse which symbolized light or power, it is an antelope or a deer which is a simple, innocent looking, herbivorous, swift moving creature. Hides of this animal used by ascetics to sit upon for meditation and to attain their union with the Supreme Being residing in the cavity of their heart, or located at the top of their head, in their Crown Chakra. The asterism, which the antelope represents, impels the ego to move forward and to endeavor to attain its inner divinity. Under Mrigashirsa, the evolving ego receives the physical form, animal instincts and the necessary impetus for the inner spirit to push itself towards its higher possibilities.

Mrigashirsha functions under the presiding deity Soma. Sri Aurobindo described Soma as "the true creator who possesses the soul and brings out of it a divine creation". This is the special role that Soma plays at Mrigashirsa. The divine nature lying within the evolving ego presently manifest in an animal form with a human mind is gradually transformed in its divine nature. Soma, according to Vedic seers, was not only an enjoyer of the celestial drink, the intoxication of *Anand*, the divine delight, inflowing upon the mind from the supramental consciousness through Truth, but he was also the one who took delight in the evolutionary movement of the universe. His delight arose from his participation in the manifestative process. As a deity presiding over Mrigashirsa, he contributed the most momentous transformation in the egoic consciousness: from the nebulous State during Rohini Soma gave to the egos a physical existence and an innocent animal form which enabled them to attain the highest spiritual delight of self-awareness, Samadhi. Soma also prepared the ego to bear the necessary turmoil and strain likely to occur during its transformation into a human form wherein the ego could function more freely in order to attain its ultimate destiny.

Mrigashirsa represents descent of immensely powerful evolutionary impulses, which unfold the divine plan of manifestation effectively and efficiently. The asterism is related with Moon, which is energized by the spirit of Soma related with life-renewal and reincarnation. The renewal process begins in a real way after Mrigashirsa enters into Gemini. It is also noted that Soma is mystically connected with Gandharvas* who are powerful occult forces. The Gandharvas knew and revealed the secrets of heaven and divine Truth to mortals. The association of these deities with Soma led to tremendous inflow of supernatural forces under Mrigashirsa. A great concentration of celestial influence under Mrigashirsa is also evident from the fact that Soma, the spirit energizing Moon, Mars which helped externalization of the inner spirit, Venus which ruled over Taurus and Mercury which ruled over Gemini are also

importantly related with this asterism. Mrigashirsa is the beginning of the process of life-renewal and reincarnation whereby the divine Truth is revealed to the mortals. Commenting upon these mysteries, H.P. Blavatsky stated that Soma is the Mystery God who presides over the mystic Occult nature in man and in universe. She also mentioned that the story relating to the birth of Mercury as an off spring of Soma and Tara, the wife of Jupiter, is meant to indicate that the birth of human intellect giving rise to mystic vision and trance revelations could propel mankind with its own impetus¹.

(*) The Devas, Pitris, Rishis; the Suras and the Asuras; the Daityas and Adaityas, the Danavas and Gandharvas, etc., have all their Synonyms in our Secret Doctrine . but it is useless to give their ancient names, as it would only create confusion. (*The Secret Doctrine*, op. rat, Vol. I.,p. 155)

(1) *The Secret Doctrine*, op. cit., Vol. III., p. 57

It is this context that the stormy asterism, which follows Mrigashirsa, assumes much significance. The three asterisms in Gemini namely the latter half of Mrigashirsa, whole of Ardra, and the three quarters of Punarvasu are important in developing mind-principle in man and in churning it deeply so as to bring to the surface the limitless possibilities of human mind. Mrigashirsa represented the crossroad, which gave a direction, and an insight, into the depth of impending egoic unfoldment. It marked the Separation from the mass of universal consciousness into well-identified distinct scintilla. From now onwards each ego became responsible for its own differentiated consciousness and reactions of its self ; the law of karma became operative in an individual manner. It also plunged the individual in the turbulence of mental conflicts, perversions and ambitions to accomplish extraordinary deeds. The storms created self-centred activities (primarily aroused under the following Ardra asterism) churned the inner being and exposed much of the inner qualities. But the storm and the stress under Gemini were enormous. Only on successful weathering of the impediments of the path, the ego could hope to retrieve its lost glory and pristine puissance and delight. The assurance however, encouraged the egos to push forward and enter the Pushya phase of their journey when the vision of the realization of one's real nature could be possible. Mrigashirsa impulsion is very momentous. It is for such reasons that Shiva Purana stated that all religious practices such as worship, sacrifices, and holy deep in sacred rivers performed during Mrigashirsa produced immense beneficence. At Mrigashirsa one could prepare oneself for the turmoil likely to occur during Ardra, for realization of one's veiled basic nature as well as for the entry into the extensive region of the 'bounded Infinity', the cosmic matrix in which divinization process of the self commences.

ARDRA

(60°40' - 80°00')

Ardra extends from 66°40' to 80°00' in Gemini. It induces psychic independence and intensification of self-centredness.

The law of karma becomes markedly evident in interaction of feelings, sympathies and antipathies, as well as in suspicion and anger against one another. The impact of attraction and repulsion inherent in all sensuous experiences is pronounced. These interactions become self-generating evolutionary forces. But they also arouse restrictions necessary to regulate the process of self-unfoldment. Ardra represented such twists and turns, which are necessary for transforming group consciousness into self-centred psychological nature. In this sense Ardra marked almost a new beginning directed *ab initio* leading to ego-centric activities. These characteristics are symbolized by a human head or a precious stone, a precious gern, as distinguished from the head of a deer, which represented the previous asterism. The former asterism namely Mrigashirsa represented animal nature in the human body whereas the latter asterism namely Ardra stood for the realization of divinity indwelling in a human form. The difference in the two symbols signified the change from instinctive group behaviour to incipience of mind-principle with individual uniqueness.

The word Ardra is derived from a root-word, which means 'wet', 'moist', 'fresh', 'new' etc. The word is also connected with the concept of flowering, moving, blossoming or evolving. In the present context, it suggests the flow of life-energy, the moisture which Supports seeds to sprout and the plants to grow luxuriantly in their verdant splendour. The energy which on Polarisation produced animal passion, instinctive behaviour at Mrigashirsa flows further to arouse self-awareness which is a unique feature of human beings. At Ardra, the emerging consciousness received its unique spark, the precious gem, which was the awareness of its central core.

This asterism, operates under Gemini ruled by Mercury with Pavana, air, as its presiding deity. Pavana, the wind-god, strains the chaff from the corn; under Gemini, the indwelling spirit and the vehicle through which it is expressed are differentiated. Ardra intensified the differentiation, but the mind-principle which is related with Mercury produced adaptability, the impulse of growth and self-knowledge. The unfoldment under Ardra is controlled by Rahu, the planet which ruled over the asterism. This shadow planet imperceptibly churns the inner nature and shakes the ego so much so that the ground is prepared for fresh impulse to take roots. The ego now begins to approach its problems in radically different manner. The ego becomes more positive and voluntary reflexes begin to work more assertively.

The four quarters of Ardra are ruled by Jupiter, and Saturn, which have important function in spiritualizing the individual, and in opening his inner eyes to inner realities, but the asterism as a whole operates under the planetary rulership of Rahu, which oversees the Operation of the Law of Karma. While implementing this law, the objective of the egoic unfoldment is accomplished under the impetus of Saturn and Jupiter, which rule over its different phases. The impact of helpful responses resulting from sensuous reactions of the emerging ego is Consolidated and well established as beneficent *samskaras*, temperamental proclivities. In order to make the ego aware of various finer principles of life and Operations of the inner spirit, Saturn produces appropriate conditions so as to make the full use of the churning of the emotional and psychological relationships, and of the differentiation aroused under Mrigashirsa. Jupiter encouraged the urge to grow and expand motivated by thirst for sentient existence. Saturn restricted the Jovian impact and produced the storm, which finally led to extensive psychological expansion with regard to outer and inner realities. These two planets seriously disturbed the placidity and smoothness with which the evolutionary process was progressing so far. This is the Situation, which makes the Gemini people suffer intense mental conflict and serious upheavals in their life conditions, but all these occur under the watchful care of Rahu. Every Situation takes place as a result of the Karmic law. They are arranged in such a way that over a number of lives, under the cyclic law of evolution, the mental agitation and conflicts lead the ego to a higher level of understanding. Rahu imprints at this stage the supremacy of the law of regeneration. These Operations towards the end of the Ardra impulse when Jupiter takes over as the ruler of the fourth quarter, produce better understanding of the life-process, and mental resignation to the inevitable turbulence in the growth process. Rahu's mission is to lead the ego to greater enlightenment, which lays the foundation of deeper self-realization.

The Operation of the Law of Karma is a very onerous responsibility which Rahu discharges. Rahu oversees this Operation, which is inlaid in the very existence of sentience at all levels. Karma is the guiding principle and the thirst for sensuous experiences is the propelling force in human life, which operates under this law. Explaining the importance of this Law of Karma in human life, a Master of the Wisdom stated that "Karma is the guiding power, and Trishna, the thirst or desire to live - the proximate force or energy, the resultant of human (or animal) action, which out of the old Skandhas* produce the new group that form the new being and control the nature of the birth itself'. The group of Skandhas formed and constituted the physical and mental individuality; it consisted of the material properties and attributes (Rupa), sensations (Vedana), abstract ideas (Sanna), physical and mental tendencies (Sanskaras), and mental powers (Vinnana). The Sanskara include mental, physical and moral predispositions. Besides these, even heresy, delusion and egotism referring to the doctrine of the self are included among the bases of, or Skandas of, karma. To control such a complicated structure of the being produced by various stellar impulses culminating with Mrigashirsa; Rahu applies the law of retribution worked out during the rulership of Saturn (on the second and third quarters of Ardra). The unsettling repercussion of this action of Rahu makes this shadow planet highly terrifying.

The tumultuous Situation during Ardra takes place under the regency of Rudras. These creative agents of Nature include devas, angles, and other highly powerful entities. The eleven Rudras are the most important deities besides the twelve Adityas, eight Vasus and two Ashwinis in the evolutionary scheme of Nature. They are regarded as an aspect of Mahadeva, and the Rig Veda called them 'the howlers' who were the beneficent and the maleficent forces at the same time, they were the healers as well as the destroyers. Other Vedas spoke of them as the Divine Egos aspiring to return to their pure deific State while they were imprisoned in the Earthly form whose fierce passion resulting from this conflict made them the roarers, the terrible.

(*) = The trunk or the stem of a tree; the body

(1) The Mahatma Letters to S.P. Sinnett, A.T. Barker(ed), London, p.110

Subsequent scriptures gave detailed description of this god-head. According to them, the primary Rudra gave birth to innumerable secondary Rudras and they were given different names. The father of Rudras is sometimes identified with the god of fire. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad made them the 'ten vital breaths' or Prabhas with Manas, the mind, as the eleventh one. The Vishnu Purana described Rudra as springing from the forehead of Brahma, the Creator, who divided himself into male and female which led to the birth of innumerable Rudras half of whom were brilliant and gentle and the other half, black and ferocious. Blavatsky alluded Brahma calling Shiva, the Destroyer, as Rudra and giving him seven other names which signified the seven forms of manifestation and also the seven powers of Nature which destroy to create and regenerate¹. From these references one infers the Ardra impulse arousing two contrary streams of creative forces both interacted in such a way that the turmoil gradually impelled the egos to return to their pure, deific State. The network of entanglements at this stage results from the polarised nature of the mind-principle reacting to complexities of karmic forces in which physical, sensuous and mental tendencies played important role, created much conflict, turmoil and turbulence which exposed many inner aspects of the ego. The Rudras, with regency over Ardra lead to the polarised mature of the mind-principle in action, its impact on creative evolution of mankind, and cessation of the instinctive reactions.

The Rudras provided a new impetus in manifestation. It is allegorized in the destruction of sacrificial rites of Daksha Prajapati. Daksha was a son of Brahma, and he was one of the Prajapatis, one of the progenitors of the human race. In the Rig Veda, he is said to have arisen from Aditi, the infinite cosmic space. Daksha gave fillip to copulative procreative process. According to Puranic stories, Parvati who was one of the daughters of Daksha was married to Lord Mahadeva but Daksha did not invite Mahadeva to the great sacrificial rite that he organized. However, when Parvati came to attend, she found her husband was not only not invited but was neglected and humiliated despite his being universally worshipped as the supreme God. So she immolated herself. On receiving the news of it, Shiva took out a thread of his hair, struck it against a stone, separated the lock of the hair into

(1) *The Secret Doctrine*. op. cit.. Vol. Iv.. p. 118

two from which emerged Birbhadra, a military Commander, and Mahakali, the fierce and bloody consort of Shiva. Birbhadra destroyed the religious Performance of Daksha, vanquished all the opposing devas, caught hold of the deity sanctifying the sacrifices who was himself fleeing the site in the form of an antelope and beheaded him. He also twisted the head of Daksha, separated it from the main body, and consigned the same to flames. The gods and the Rishis interceded on behalf of Daksha but the Lord Mahadeva explained the incident as a karmic retribution, which according to Him was the supreme law in manifestation. Even he could not undo what was already done. Mahadeva however, suggested that a goat's (or a ram's) head could be fixed as the Substitute head of Daksha to revive him and those devas whose hands were broken in the scuffle could work with those of Ashwini Kumar's hands. Rudra Shiva thus mollified the damage done by the indiscretion of Daksha. This story in a nutshell described the turbulence and its aftermath that takes place at Ardra.

The above story described the consequences of egotism, which take place by overlooking and neglecting the basic underlying spirit in the creative process. The division of Shiva-Rudra's hair into Birbhadra and Mahakali re-enacted the story of Brahma Splitting himself into male and female creative forms - Brahma-Viraj. and Vach-Viraj. It reminded of the dual nature of human psyche complementary to each other which possessed immensely great creative and destructive powers. It was for this reason that Blavatsky had associated Rudras with 'the seven powers in Nature which 'destroyed to create and regenerate'. The duality of the mind-principle raises storms and creates tumultuous unsettlement specially as a result of the animal passion lying deep in the human beings but after the exposure of the aftermath of animal propensities when the duality of the human intellect is realised and the individual becomes aware of his divine possibilities, the regenerative forces (represented by Ashwini Kumars) could start once again. The turmoil raised by egotistic indiscretions and denial of the basic divinity of the ego leads to karmic retribution, which is expressed under the Ardra impulsions. It leads to superimposition of (or Substitution by) or revival of the animal form (ram's head which is harmonious to evolutionary impetus) and the basic spiritual creative process. It emphasised the revival of the Ashwini type creative momentum once again. After the destruction of egotism and self-centred approach to one's functions in the manifestative process, Ardra leads once again to the recommencement of the evolutionary impetus; The Rudras intervened to establish the supremacy of the Law of Karma as the guiding principle aroused by animal instincts and human passion. Ardra emphasised that the law of retribution could not be obliterated even by the highest authority in Nature.

The release of tremendous creative impulses under Ardra operating under Rahu emphasised the indwelling divine splendour (the precious gem hidden within the self) as well as the polarisation, which could be unveiled and realised by obeying the laws of evolutionary process namely, the Law of Karma and the cyclic periodicity of births and deaths. Towards the last quarter of Ardra, Jupiter leads to such a realization and encourages the ego to adapt itself with nature and the natural course of manifestation. This psychological orientation leads to greater egoic expression of its imprisoned splendour. The ground is thus prepared for the descent of new creative impulses under the powerful Punarvasu.

PUNARVASU

(80°00' - 93°20')

The three quarters of Punarvasu lie within Gemini and the fourth quarter extends into Cancer. The asterism links the two signs related with Kama-Manasic or the passionate and emotional nature of man. Gemini ruled by Mercury is a connecting link between the supra-conscious energy-source namely the Atma-Buddhi-Manas and the sub-conscious impulses veiled by materiality of earthly existence. Cancer ruled by Moon, on the other hand, reflects the solar rays for the germination, growth and fructification of herbs, plants, animals and human beings. Mercury digested the experiences gained through various sense and action organs and transformed them as intelligence. It directed the higher influences, which reached the physical plane and guided the psychological behavior.

Punarvasu formed a strong nexus between the Manasic or the intellectual impulses flowing through Gemini and the Buddhic impulses or pure intelligence descending through Cancer. Punarvasu represented the union between thought (Gemini) and Spirit (Cancer), together representing transformation of sense experiences into pure wisdom as well as reawakening the vision of one's pristine nature.

The word Punarvasu consists of two words namely Punah meaning 'again', and Vasu meaning 'a ray of light', 'a gem' or 'a jewel'. Vasu also refers to a special class of deities. Thus the asterism emphasizes the repetition or the reappearance of Vasus, who represented the shining natural forces operating like a ray of light; they are importantly related with solar or Fohatic energy. Punarvasu revitalizes the emerging intelligence in a Strange manner which is often considered as "active femininity", something similar to Bharani.

Punarvasu bestows upon the individual wealth, riches, gold, water or such other things of importance. These substances mentioned in classical astrological texts are however, different words used for Vasu himself. They are immensely valuable for a common-man; they provide enduring stability. Punarvasu was known to the ancient seers as a Channel of deep-acting impulses. The eight Vasus are described as attendants upon Indra who represented the luminous mind ever engaged in retrieving the divine cows from Vritras, the darker forces of ignorance. When the ego enters the domain of Punarvasu, the reality of pure consciousness or the luminous mind, which is its birth-right, are aroused but are missing from it. The ego has to seek them and secure them as its precious possession. This realization along with inspiration to retrieve the luminous mind, the divine spark, is the central impetus received under Punarvasu, which becomes its divine inspiration. It becomes the motive power for its subsequent course of action towards self-realization. Punarvasu lays the important foundation for regaining one's pristine nature.

The advent of Punarvasu heralds the subsidence of Ardra turbulence. It is associated with cessation of mental conflict and reawakening to Light and a new dawn of understanding. It expands the mental horizon. As mentioned earlier, Punarvasu means Vasu repeated again, or the reappearance of a ray of Light. The word Vasu *inter alia* means 'the tie of a yoke', 'the number eight', as well as 'a specific class of deities'. Punarvasu, the asterism, links Gemini and Cancer together; the ray of its Light which vibrates throughout the universe, is of the nature of consciousness, the faculty by which one perceives the existence, both around and within oneself. Thus Punarvasu pours forth the impulse, which links the individual with the universal spirit without either of them losing their distinct identity. Consciousness is energised by the solar Logos, but the eight elements namely water (Apas), earth (Prithvi), fire (Agni), Moon (Chandra), Dawn (Pratyusha), Pole-star (Dhruva), Air (Vayu) and luster or splendour (Pravash) are the important bases for the preservation, nourishment and stability of human and cosmic existence. The ingress of Punarvasu at this momentous phase of egoic-unfoldment secures all the necessary wherewithals, which could be required for the expression of divine splendour latent in man. When the

Tamasic Attributes take control over the ego's divine pilgrimage, it would be left completely on its own inherent resources excepting certain inspirational guidance from the finer forces of Nature. At that phase of self-unfoldment, the valuable gifts granted by Punarvasu would sustain it and would enable it to push forward to retrieve its pristine innocence and luminous splendor.

The growing complexity of the human mind and its expanding domain in which it operates were well signified by the superintendence of Aditi, the Vedic deity, who represented the Infinite Mother, the Cow Unslayable, the Supreme Nature, or the infinite Consciousness. In the ancient System of thought, the being and the consciousness were two aspects of the same unity, they were merely outer and inner aspects of each other. When Aditi took over the regency of Punarvasu, the significant synthesis occurred in such a way that the nature of the two under the veil of *avidya*, - spiritual ignorance, born of *ahamkara*, egotism, intermingled in such a way that the primeval nature of the ego was obliterated. Aditi, however, has very deep-acting influence: it is infinite existence, it is conceived as the infinite consciousness, the primeval Light manifest in seven radiances, and from it the various gods are born. Such is the immensity of Aditi. The egoic consciousness at Punarvasu contained within it (the consciousness) the wholeness of man, yet its self-awareness was veiled. In this infinite consciousness, the intermingling of human thought and emotions, the gradual superimposition of materiality and various sheaths over one's pristine nature did not destroy the septenary principle of the drive inherent in egoic Constitution which commenced at Ashwini itself. Sri Aurobindo emphasised this relationship between the septenary principle in Nature and Aditi when he mentioned that "Aditi is the source of all the cosmic forms of consciousness from the physical upwards, the seven cows are her forms and there are, we are told seven names and seven seats of the Mother" He further added that "Usha as the mother of the cows can only be a form or power of this Supreme Light, or this Supreme Consciousness of Aditi"¹.

Usha, in Vedic literature, is the illuminating dawn of higher or undivided consciousness. It is always the dawn of Truth. The septenary principle in man, an essential feature of his egoic unity, is merely an aspect of Truth, which could dawn in innumerable, limitless manner. That possibility is the acme of mental accomplishment represented by Gemini. The influence of Aditi, which provided "the limitless expansion, the endless expanse beyond the earth, beyond the clouds, beyond the sky", is both intensive and extensive in energizing creative illuminated mind. Jovian impact gives it an enduring direction to proceed in the direction of Truth which Aditi represented and which it alone could enable the ego to realize its real Self and finally attain self-realization, or Nirvana.

(1) The Secret of the Veda, op. eh. p. 126

The Impulse towards this goal passes through several phases. Only three quarters of Punarvasu ruled by Mars, Venus, and Mercury are in Gemini while the fourth quarter ruled by Moon extends into Cancer. Its first three quarters are concerned with externalization of its basic impulses and direction of the intellect towards the most abstruse principle of manifestation. The Jovian influence protects the maturity of the mind-principle and Aditi provides the matrix in which it could operate. The initial phase of Punarvasu ruled by Mars is full of enthusiasm and eagerness to experience the newness of the synthesis between intellect and physical life. The second and third quarters under Venus and Mercury are primarily concerned with psycho-mental activities. During this phase the intellect wanders in the non-physical realm, enjoying the sensations and deciphering the laws of Nature. The fourth quarter of the asterism in Cancer radically alters the nature of the outflow of the impulse and the egoic consciousness is directed towards greater abstraction and deeper realization of the laws of life. The ego at this stage begins to receive flashes of its pristine nature and its desire to return to the Source becomes intense. In predictive astrology, it is a Situation of considerable dissatisfaction with one's existing conditions. At this stage, the seeds break their shell and begin to sprout in the vastness of existence. Under Punarvasu, the seeds of psycho-mental consciousness are exposed to the limitless expanse of manifestation and they begin to assume their poly-dimensional form. The experiences gained during group or collective existence are replayed and lessons thereof are learnt at the personal level. At Punarvasu, a new beginning or a new dawn of personal experiences and their understanding takes place. With such preparations the ego enters the realm of Cancer, which concludes the Rajasic phase of egoic development.

To sum up, the Punarvasu impulse released the egos from their racial collectivism, and opened each of them to experience the limitless expanse of the universe. Aditi, the presiding deity of the asterism, represented 'the eternal space of boundless whole'. Aditi supported the sky and sustained the Earth. She

was given the earring, symbolizing the Serpent Fire the Kundalini Shakti, obtained as a result of the Churning of the Ocean by the gods and the demons. She is even described as Devaki, the mother of Lord Krishna who was her eighth child (the word Vasu also meant 'the number eight') who saved the world from the onslaught of Darker Forces. Under Punarvasu, a new Light (Krishna) is born and a new understanding is imparted so that the ego could begin to realize its ultimate destiny and is prepared to receive the Divine Wisdom. Punarvasu heralds a new dawn.

CANCER (Karkatakam)

(90°00'-120°00')

Cancer known as Karkatakam in Sanskrit marks the end of the primary Rajasic attribute. The Divine Spark, which began its journey of terrestrial experiences from pure subjective existence at the beginning of manifestation, symbolized by Mesham or Aries representing the Unborn Creative Principle, has now reached the Karkatakam or the Cancer stage where its externalisation is complete and it is now ready to experience a different kind of interaction for its further unfoldment. Since the transformation of animal instincts, cessation of Group Karma and the emergence of self-centred differentiated intellect, the creative flow of energy began to let the individual intellect blossom in the multi-dimensional universe so as to make it aware of its limitations as well as the tremendous opportunities for it awaiting in due course. The fourth sign of the zodiac provided the necessary conditions, which enabled the divine ego to recognize its material restrictions as well as to envision the possibilities of experiencing pure wisdom. Cancer presents the two extremes of existence, the dizzy heights of egoic possibilities and the dismal depths of material (physical) limitations. It also marks the limits restricting the expansion of human consciousness.

An occult tradition affirms that the North and the South Poles, over the millennia, gradually change their relative positions leading to geophysical changes on the earth. This change altered the positions of the tropics in relation with the Sun, which limits the region beyond which the Sun cannot become vertical. The inability of the solar radiance to penetrate directly beyond the tropics limited the area of direct infusion of the Superconscious; the descent of the Solar influence was therefore considerably contained. Such changes qualified Cancer to limit the human potential bestowed during any Manvantaric Cycle; Capricorn represented the acme of egoic attainment. Describing the nature of influx received at Karkatakam, T. Subba Row, the eminent Vedantist of the nineteenth Century, remarked that Cancer represented the sacred tetra gram signifying the mantras of Pranava, the four avasthas (phases of consciousness, the four stage of Brahma and so on¹).

(I) *Collection of Esoteric Writings*. T. -Subba Row, Madras, p. 5

The Vedic seers identified the individual with the Supreme Self as well as with the universe, but the fourth zodiacal sign restricted the possibility of such an attainment. The Tropic of Cancer demarcated the zone beyond which the Sun cannot shine vertically, the fourth sign of the zodiac puts a limit beyond which the ego cannot during the given Manvantaric period grow. The various characteristics of Karkatakam are represented by the four heads of Brahma; this allegorical reference has been discussed in some detail by T. Subba Row. He stated that by following the method of Converting the syllables of the name of the zodiac into its corresponding numbers according to the general mode of transmutation so often alluded to in Mantra Shastra, it would make the word Karkatakam represented by four inclined straight lines which stood for the sacred tetragram which was analogous to the four heads of Brahma. It pointed to the four possibilities in different aspects of manifestation. In the present context, Cancer represented waking (Jagrath), dreaming (Swapna), deep sleep (Susupti), and the last stage known as deep meditation or Nirvana (Turya) conditions. It also represented the four creative aspects of Brahma namely, fire (Vaiswanara), light (Taijasa or Hiranyagarbha), wisdom (Prajna) and the Supreme Power (Ishwara). The four aspects of creative dimensions were also known as physical (Sthoolam), subtle (Sookshma), essential core or seed (Beejam) and the detached onlooker or witness (Sakshi). These dimensions emphasised the extent of expansion in different modes of manifestation beyond which the ego cannot hope to grow. Cancer thus sets the limit for the egoic expansion. The story of the Separation of the head of Daksha* which was mentioned earlier, suggested that Daksha, the creative power in its primeval State, could aspire to attain godhood but after the superimposition of a goat's head restrictions were imposed on him; he was put under limitations of the evolutionary chain. Cancer provided the matrix for the growth and development of such a 'bounded infinity' or the egoic consciousness.

The possibilities for egoic expansion and the restrictions on it were well depicted by crab, the emblem for the sign. Crab is a ten-footed crustacean found near sea-coasts, dwelling in water though not deep within it and frequenting the shore where it passes most of its active time. The crab also symbolized to basic features of man. Its ten feet are analogous to five sense and five action organs through which human beings acquired their experiences. The glistening eyes of the crab

(*) The details of the story are given earlier in connection with Ardra asterism.

revealed its alertness, sensitivity and the interaction of its inner consciousness with the outside environment. It is through these reflexes that its organs of movement and propulsion, whether for acquiring its sustenance, safety or sensuous experiences are activated. The shallow banks of the sea and the adjoining shore which are the natural habitat of the crab refers to the man's life extending over the shallow depths of the mysterious sea of the Spirit world and the earthy base of physical existence. The sea with its mysterious depths stands for the immensity of ethereal existence which man finds difficult to comprehend and explore; if he ventured into its deeper profundities he may be swallowed by its deep waters. It is for such reasons that yoga literature prescribed austerities for aspirants who desired to venture into unfathomed depths of spirituality. The mind-principle of a common individual is active only at its superficial levels; it is concerned more with security of its immediate physical environment. Everyday life and behavior pattern of human individuals do not show their openness to impersonal blending into universal consciousness; their personal self, immediate family relationships, individual gains and sensuous gratifications absorb almost their whole life. The ordinary man does not seem open either to humanity at large or to the tremendous expanse of spirit within and around him. He is active on the superficial layers of his mind. The moment he ventures to explore the deeper levels of life, he is radically transmuted. A new sense of existence and a new dawn of consciousness change his life radically. Such a change could alter his inner being and provide him new possibilities at his command, but it is rarely that he ventures into deeper waters. Generally, his experiences and possibilities like that of a crab are conditioned by the limits of the physical universe and his (goat-like) mental horizon.

A special feature of crab, similar to serpents, but not available to ram, bull, goat, deer or any other animal, is the regular sloughing of its outer shell as it grows big for it. It does so while remaining inwardly, on the consciousness level, unchanged. By this process of rejuvenation, the crab maintains a continuity of consciousness even when its physical form is completely altered. The human individual also continually renews his sheaths while maintaining the unity of his consciousness over various births. The crab functions within the given limitations of life and its Constitution, but it is given sufficient opportunities to develop its own innate faculties and attain through sloughing the maximum limit earmarked for its growth and accomplishments. So does the human individual. Cancer signifies the limits of human possibilities and provides the necessary wherewithals to accomplish them.

Cancer is ruled by Moon, Jupiter is exalted in this sign and Mars attains its debilitation. The primary function of Moon is to reflect the solar radiance and to modulate it to suit the growth requirements of life. The Moon does not contribute any special quality to that already received from the Sun. It merely adjusts and directs the same to various forms of manifestation. The intense radiation of solar energy is received, regulated and directed to various recipients on earth by Moon. The lunar ownership of Cancer enables it to lay down the limits within which the individuals and other living beings could grow. The Moon as the World Mother, the generatrix of the universe, has the responsibility of nourishing, protecting and providing the best conditions for the unfoldment of the child's personality; she cannot add anything which is not already inherent in the child. The Moon provided the best conditions for the protection, sprouting the luxuriant growth of the qualities already latent in the seed; it cannot change or augment the child's inherent qualities. The Moon cannot provide any quality not already bestowed to it by the solar rays; it has to operate within the limits set down by the movement of the Sun. Cancer provides the limitless scope for growth yet the expansion is within the restrictions set by the laws of Nature and the Karmic factors relative to the individual.

Cancer represents the cosmic matrix in which the emerging egos live their life. The uncertainty of the shoreless sea and vastness of the landmass, representing the Spirit and matter, together provide the immense possibilities for the egoic experiences and unfoldment. The uncertainty of the Situation could be removed only with divine wisdom and stability inside one's real self. These are the conditions provided by the Jovian influence. Exaltation of Jupiter in Cancer referred to the immense suitability of Jovian impulse to make its most appropriate impact in this sign. At this stage, Jupiter enables superconscience to descend and transform the subconsciousness of materiality into appropriate Channel

for the radical psychological transmutation. The understanding of the hidden laws of Nature during Cancer stage of development strengthens the ego to rent asunder the avarana shakti, the enveloping power aroused under the Rajasic impulses ranging from Ashwini to Ashlesha.

Debilitation of Mars reveals that the placidity aroused under Cancer does not harmonize with fiery enthusiasm of the planet; the peace and serenity present at this stage is similar to calmness attained at Pisces when the Manvantaric journey is over and the ego has entered into its latent subjectivity. At Cancer, the Rajasic impulses have completed their mission; any further agitation, upsurge or thirst for sensuous experiences would only disturb its quietitude. It could even hinder the further course of evolutionary unfoldment whereby the lost sparkle is to be retrieved. Mars inevitably disturbs the serenity. Its debilitation suggests that the Martian initiative would only give a wrong signal. At Cancer the ego rests hoping its assimilation in the Great Matrix whereby the ego could regain the vision of its final quietitude and delight.

Cancer is dedicated to Surya who presides over it while Moon is the planet, which rules over it. The association of the two powerful sources of influence produces intense creativity: the egos resting at this stage are surcharged with such spiritual inspiration which impel them to strive towards merging with the Original Source from which they have been reeled off. Martian impulse could induce them to further intensify their material involvement which will be opposed to the innate flow of spiritualisation from Cancer. Martian Intervention at this stage could only disturb the ascent of consciousness to forge close relationship with the Original Source. Cancer represents the stability, nourishment and strong bond between the Original Source and the finite self. Punarvasu accentuated the impact of Solar regency; Pushya exposed the culmination of outward thrust, while Ashlesha flashed the grand finale of wisdom arising from the realization of the relationship between the self and the Original Cause. Cancer represents the final Station in the evolutionary journey, which readied the ego to equip itself for its return journey. Under Ashlesha, the last asterism under Rajasic impulse, the ego is provided with the wisdom of creation, and the secret of Nature, which could effectively sustain it during the course of its struggle against materiality in which it has been so far enmeshed, so as to harmonize itself with special stream of consciousness on which it has to flow in the last lap of its final journey.

PUNARVASU (Contd.)

(80°00' - 93°20')

The last quarter of Punarvasu under the planetary rulership of Moon extends into Cancer, which also is under the same planet: it greatly intensified the lunar impact. Moon leads to materialization of egos according to the rhythmic law of manifestation. By now, the egos have acquired mental faculties, and their intellect has sharpened. Their self-centredness, egotism and power of discernment have also developed. At this stage, the animal passion and unconscious instincts do not motivate them to action; they have learnt to understand the significance of their reactions and relationships. They want to base their actions and behaviour on rationality. They now strive to re-enact their spiritual nobility although they are impeded by their physical and karmic limitations.

The last quarter of Punarvasu enabled every planet to attain its Vargottam position. It implied that the planet thus situated will bestow much of its beneficence and will enhance the social prestige and Status of the individual and bestow material prosperity on him. It accentuated the basic qualities inherent in the planet. In the realm of consciousness, the last quarter of Punarvasu is highly susceptible to every quality of the planet. As a consequence, it provides impetus to various egos developing on their own special Rays according to the specific stream of consciousness on which they are evolving to move onward. The egos proceed further with an understanding of their original self though this awareness is still very vague and only instinctive.

PUSHYA

(93°20'-106°40')

Pushya releases tremendous creative energy. The egoic entry into it transported it to the acme of its physical and mental development. It enjoyed a supreme sense upliftment. The descent of superconscious delight which was so overwhelming that the ego was prepared to trample over all restrictions in order to merge itself with the universal spirit. It would have borne the greatest hardship for this union even if the limitations of Manifestation for this purpose had been insurmountable. The

swelling of the spirit, the efflorescence of the inner essence, met at the periphery by the external obstructions produced beautiful pattern of forms. Physical limitations to inner urges challenged the latent spirit, which produced the best in the individual. In the same manner, the indwelling spirit struggling to regain its pristine nature is met by thickening material sheaths and karmic restrictions. The Rajasic movement at this stage attained the completion of immediate task; at Pushya the ego attained the whole of its development specified for any chain of cyclical course. At this stage all the attributes and faculties needed for its given series of births and deaths are fully developed and embedded within the material sheaths through which the ego has now to blossom to regain its pristine purity and splendour.

Such fulfillment of destiny and attainment of the height of glory do not however, indicate the end of the journey; they only suggest the approaching end of Rajasic impulses. The spirit struggling to control the material sheaths and to overcome involuntary impulses has only accomplished one phase of its pilgrimage: it has realized its creative possibilities but it has still to actualize them and bring them to fruition. At Pushya, the ego envisioned the end of the journey. It realized the illusory nature of lunar reflections. Now onward the ego will have to struggle hard to grapple with the reality of the self and the impediments confronting it. Under Pushya, the ego is seized with the desire for power and creative activity but only the wisdom that dawns upon the realization of the process of manifestation and of the superimposition of material bondages on struggling souls could bestow upon it the necessary light, not otherwise.

Pushya along with Ashlesha occupies the most of Cancer. This sign shows the limits attainable by the ego. Pushya represented the perfection of the form and Ashlesha provided the ultimate wisdom. Together these two asterisms lead to the fullness of the human individual. Under Ardra, the human intellect as an expression of the mind-principle was developed; it also aroused self-consciousness as well as an inkling of one's divine lineage. Punarvasu under the regency of Aditi provided immensity of the growth possibility and instilled the necessary ingredients for self-reliance and attainment of one's full stature. Pushya under Brihaspati led to immensity of creative delight and the attainment of one's innate potential.

Pushya perfected the form with which the pristine nature of the self could be realized. Ashlesha unveiled the wisdom, which made its recovery possible: it could make the self aware of its imprisoned splendor and of its relationship with the inner ruler immortal dwelling in the cavity of its heart. Pushya is symbolized by a flower as well as by an arrow. The planet Saturn rules over it while the Vedic deity Brahmanaspati oversees the functioning of its impulses. The flower and the arrow referred to the nature of the forces generated at this stage. Saturn and Brahmanaspati indicated the manner in which the impulses are regulated. The limit within which the unfoldment of the ego or the expansion of the spirit takes place is represented by Cancer.

Pushya is not symbolized by any specific flower but by flowers in general. Flowering takes place after the maturity of the plant, when the growth process has reached its culmination and the plant has attained its maturity to yield its fruits, the inner potential contained in the seed. A flower is the natural outcome, consummation or the denouement of the plant's evolutionary process. Flowering of a plant occurs as a culmination of the growth of the plant but it is certainly not its final destiny or the ultimate goal: the life-spark contained in it has still much farther to go. The flower needed warmth for its sustenance, for the bursting of the shell and sprouting of the shoots (Aries), it needed fertile soil and nourishment for its germination and reproduction (Taurus), moisture and sunshine (Gemini) and finally, the divine touch of devas and angels for budding and flowering (Cancer). The ultimate destiny of a flower lies in the dissolution of its physical form, disintegration of its petals, dispersal of pollen, scattering of seeds, fragmentation of the plant and finally, the merging of its various constituents in the invisible noumenal core of the manifestation. Pushya symbolized by a flower signified that the acme of intellectual growth under the asterism is importantly related with the dissolution of the self leading it to its assimilation in the universal consciousness. The dissolution can occur with complete resolution of the form at all levels to its ultimate constituents, the Spirit. Pushya readies the ego for such dissolution.

The flower representing the efflorescence of the ego with highly developed intellect has several mystic connotations often overlooked by a common man. Left to itself, a flower withers away and follows the natural course of its destiny. That can happen when an individual is unconcerned about himself and the everyday humdrum existence and meets his natural end. The normal application of the Law of Karma and the cycle of births and deaths would in their normal sweep take him to his final goal, but it may

take a long time. Alternatively, the individual may begin to take delight in his new accomplishments; the emergence of mind-principle and its growth towards fullness may induce him to indulge in self-adulation. One can adorn oneself with flowers and even derive sensuous pleasure from them. The flowers can be used for beautifying the physical form as well as for providing ocular and smelling gratifications. In the same way, the self may itself enjoy egotistically in the possession of its mental power and all that goes with it. It is evident at this stage that the excessive ego-centric fondness for one's physical form and the various psychological perversions due to distortions in mental interactions which result from the (improper) use of one's sense and action organs predominate in the individual.

Flowers are also used for offering them at the altar of divine beings and in temples. The flower expresses the religious feelings of devotion, reverence, and surrender to higher beings; flowers in this sense, become a means to establish one's link with the universal spirit. The maturity of mind-principle which marked Pushya leads to purification of one's emotions and brings clarity to the thinking process. It opens the emotional nature, the *Kama-Manas*, to the vibrations of spiritual consciousness, the *Buddhi-Manas*. This impulse opens the egoic consciousness to new dimensions of self-awareness. Pushya arouses the urge to unite with the universal spirit; it opens the ego to move towards its unlimited possibilities.

The desire to attain union with the Supreme Self and to attain one's fullness is also represented by the arrow symbol of the asterism. The arrow was used in this special sense in ancient scriptures. The Mundakopanishad referred to arrow in such a sense when it advised the aspirants to observe austerities, which could sharpen the arrow, and to shoot it directly towards the Imperishable Supreme Self - *Akshara*, that which never perishes¹. The arrow is just a link, a means, to establish contact with something at a distance and a conveyor to impress upon it one's inner determination and feelings. Arjuna, the hero of the Mahabharata, shot his arrows at the commencement of the war, towards the feet of his teacher Dronacharya who was commanding the army on the other side. Arrow as a symbol for Pushya referred to the fullness of one's egoic development directed towards some higher goal in life, one's ultimate destiny the goal where the flower dissolves in the ultimate essence.

Pushya is nurtured under the planetary rulership of Saturn, and the regency of Brahmanapati. They contribute their distinct influences to the emerging ego guiding it towards its ultimate goal. The constructive role of Saturn is often overlooked. Saturn is commonly regarded as malefic precipitating painful experiences. Restrictions imposed by Saturn create unhappiness. The individual feels unhappy when Saturn thwarts his initiative and pleasure-seeking efforts or when it denies him material gifts, social status and emotional fulfillment. But it is through such restrictions that the solar effulgence reflected in human beings as creativity can be concretized. It is only under the saturnine restrictions that any manifestation within the time-space Parameter is possible. Saturn at Pushya consolidates and concretizes the expansiveness of the ego. The inner spirit is contained in the time-space matrix under its impulse; the indwelling spark is veiled by physical materiality. Under the impact of Saturn, the ego becomes aware of the parameter within which it functions, gains experiences and acquires the necessary wisdom for the soul's growth and egoic fulfillment.

The Saturnian impact is intensified and properly directed under the regency of Brahmanapati. In Vedic literature, Brahma, Brahmanapati and Brihaspati were three distinct powers with separate functions. Sri

(1) *Mundakopanishad*, II. 2 (iii)

Aurobindo emphasised the distinct functions of these deities. He stated that Brahma was the conscious soul-power that created the worlds by the Vedic Word, or Mantras in their profoundest aspect, the stress in the name falling more upon the conscious soul-power than upon the Word which expresses it. The Word represented Brahman and signified the rhythm, which created the worlds and creates perpetually. Brihaspati (Jupiter) was the master of this supreme Word, the stress in this name falling upon the potency of the Word rather than upon the thought-power, which is behind it. Sri Aurobindo stated that the two varying stresses in the name Brahmanapati are unified and equalized. Brahmanapati, according to him, is the link-name between the general and the special aspects of the same deity. In subsequent literature, the distinction was obliterated and Brahma was described as the cosmic creator and Brihaspati was relegated as a planetary deity presiding over the planet with the same name. In the process, Brahmanapati completely disappeared although it remained vaguely related with Brihaspati (Jupiter).

The planet Brihaspati is said to bring down the superconscious to the material level. It helped the delimitation of the area under its Operation and brought down the superconscious to transform the

vastness of its Light into various forms. Sri Aurobindo commenting upon the role of Jupiter stated that it is he who established firmly the limits and definitions of the Earth, that is to say, of the material consciousness. It is out of the superconscient that existence descends into subconscient and carries with it that which emerges here as the individual human being, the conscious soul. Explaining the importance of Brahmanaspati at this stage, Sri Aurobindo stated that the existence out of which all formations are made is an obscure, fluid and indeterminate movement, Water. The first necessity is to create a sufficiently stable formation out of the flux and running so as to form a basis for the life of the conscient. This Brihaspati does in the formation of the physical consciousness and its world by force, by a sort of mighty constraint upon the resistance of the subconscient. This great creation he effects by establishing the triple principle of mind, life and body, always present together and involved in each other or evolved out of each other in the world of the cosmic labour and fulfillment. The three together form the triple seat of Agni, and there he works out the gradual work of accomplishment and perfection, which is the object of the sacrifice. Brihaspati forms by sound, by his cry, for the Word is the cry of the soul as it awakens to ever-new perceptions and formations¹.

The momentous activities taking place at Cancer stage are well expressed by the relationship between Moon and Jupiter, the former owning the sign and the latter occupying it in exaltation. It is at this stage that the ego listens to the sound of Naad, the word, and craves it ascend to the superconscient, its ultimate destiny. The tremendous expansion of consciousness after the stabilization of the rapidly flowing streams of creative impulses awakens in the ego new perceptions and intense urges to ascend to the superconscient. The stability attained at Pushya enables the ego to dive deeper in its own inner self and to begin exploration into the mysteries of manifestation. Pushya with perfection of physical form also brings to light Truth Consciousness to the ego.

An extraordinary Situation is produced at this stage by the planetary ownership of the asterism by Saturn and its regency by Brahmanaspati. The two impulses at the superficial level seem contradictory: the latter producing tremendous movement on the inner plane with its expression in physical changes, material growth and impetus for perpetual evolutionary movement, and the former producing, on the other hand, powerful restrictions, dissolution of material attainments and intense detachment from material impositions. These forces operate like waves of opposing thought currents, one stream trying to go beyond the existing boundary set up against the ego while the other stream is ever confronting it to push the same back. So all efforts of the ego to transcend the given line of demarcation is foiled and is pushed back; the emerging waves take the ego to the farthest limit from which it is pushed back repeatedly and it has to recoil. The swing between the two extremes produces a sense of despondency. Pushya leads to an unusual disillusionment or a disappointment from given conditions of life, which induces the individual to seek further insight into the process of manifestation, the law of perfection and the validity of all physical attainments one has so far accomplished. This urge leads the ego to the next stream of consciousness represented by Ashlesha.

(1) *The Secret of the Veda*, op. cit, pp 306-313

ASHLESHA

(106° 40'-120° 00')

Ashlesha occupies the last 13°20' of Cancer. The Rajasic impulses end with it. It marks the finale of egoic immersion in matter. At the same time, it represented the highest wisdom possible for the ego in its present cyclic chain of evolution. Ashlesha, Jyestha and Revati are the three asterisms whose mystic depths are difficult to fathom. On the one side, they signified the momentous experiences the ego has gained, arduous hurdles it has overcome, and heart wrenching trails it has undergone. On the other hand, these asterisms stand at the crossroad from which a new horizon of future unfoldment is envisioned, a new dawn of luminous immensity of power and happiness is perceived, and the radiance of ultimate destiny beckons the individual. The life under these asterisms is never peaceful and happy, but the trials and tribulations of radical transformation in one's inner life always bring a mysterious exuberance and a sense of inner fulfillment. They inspire the individual to embark enthusiastically upon his new adventure.

At the terminal point of Ashlesha, there is the beginning of Tamasic impulsions. It generates what the Vedantists call the Vikshepa-Shakti, the power which dispels the veils of ignorance, avidya, imposed during the immaterialisation process. The process of dispelling ignorance requires the reversal of all that was accomplished under the Rajasic impulsions. Ashlesha provided the inner conviction that the thirst for sentient experiences, the feeling of 'me' and 'mine' as well as the bondage of karmic forces

generated so far will have to be transcended to attain one's pristine innocence. The spirit within must be retrieved in its primeval nature for which the reality of subjectivity must be realized. With this understanding, there arises the feeling of great Void, unreal nature of one's very existence but with it also arises the comprehension of one's helplessness, the great despair, the immensity of the world soul or the universal consciousness and the meaningless attainments of the little self. Ashlesha always brings intense mentation, vast expansion of consciousness and a devastating sense of disillusionment.

Ashlesha means 'disunion', 'disjunction'. Ketu, the descending Node of the Moon, which rules over the following asterism, is fabled to have originated from Ashlesha. This asterism separates one phase of impulses from another; it isolates the individual from his fellow-beings, leads him to serious mentation (or meditation) and makes his life very lonely. It illumines the mind and awakens wisdom, but intellect and wisdom do not (necessarily) make the individual gregarious.

Rajasic impulses had so far been leading the ego from its noumenal, universal and collective consciousness to phenomenal and fragmented aspect of the divine spark embedded under deep veil of materiality. At the end of Ashlesha all these have to be given up and the process of fragmentation has to be transcended in order to rend asunder the various sheaths of materiality acquired so as to regain one's pristine light, power and happiness. Ashlesha prepares the ego at the conclusion of its Operation so that the individual is strong and wise enough to confront the various difficulties and ordeals that arise on its later phase of the journey and to wrest from the Tamasic or the darker forces what rightfully belongs to it.

Ashlesha occupying the last phase of Rajasic impulses separates the two mainstreams of influences flowing through it; one pushes the ego towards terrestrial existence with thirst for sensuous experiences, and the other stream on which the ego clamors and struggles to extricate itself from materiality and fragmentation. With development of intellect as an Instrument for comprehending the actual State of affairs, the ego leaves the path so far trodden and enters the Tamasic zone in order to come face to face with its own real self.

Ashlesha induces the individual to consider itself separate from the rest; it strengthens the feeling of importance and the sense of uniqueness which in fact, are expressions of one's egotism. All experiences following the Ashlesha impulses will have a separate ledger of their karmic account. So far the experiences primarily had been of the subjective nature. The early stages of manifestation comprised such abstract principles as Atma, Mahat, Mahabhutas, Tattwas and other aspects of life which were difficult for an ordinary individual to comprehend and cognise, but with them one could experience the true and the false. Ashlesha gives final touches to the principles of manifestation but it also intensifies the acquisition of double-edged wisdom, which could be effective, both as beneficent as well as maleficent power depending upon its use.

Ashlesha is owned by Mercury which produces mysterious results. Ordinarily connected with mind-principle and human intellect, Mercury has the capacity to operate in several directions simultaneously pushing intelligence in diverse directions. It even produces distortion, delusion, egotism, spiritual obscurities and instability of the mind. At the same time it has the power to channelize and contact the Supreme Light. Mercury is a bridge. It facilitates the descent of superconscious, which vivifies and illumines the mind. It is through Mercury that all experiences, sensuous or otherwise, are transmuted into pure wisdom enabling the subconscious to ascend to the Status of supreme knowledge. The dual nature of Mercury is well appreciated by spiritualists, religious seers and even by modern psychologists. Jung stated of Mercury as possessing "a double nature, being a god of revelations and also the spirit of quicksilver, for which reason he was represented as a hermaphrodite".¹ Explaining the mysterious nature of the planet, Jung stated that "Mercurius is the divine winged Hermes manifest in water, the god of revelation, lord of thought and sovereign psyche pomp. His shadow falls upon the earth but his image is reflected in water".²

The immensity of the scope of Mercurial Operation bestows upon the egoic consciousness the capacity to comprehend Truth, and it also confers upon it the power to veil the same. The impact of Mercury at Ashlesha enables the ego to attain the highest level of awareness, reach the superconscious and at the same time create illusory manifestations to hold it fast in its passionate embrace as evident in materialistic attachments of everyday common individuals. Ashlesha under Mercury accentuated the mind-principle, strengthened intellect and aroused the undercurrent of wisdom in one's social intercourse and discharge of the most mundane duties. Ashlesha also made pure comprehension of

Truth a possibility. The understanding under this asterism may arise from one's animal passion, Kama-Manas, which sows seeds of avidya, but Ashlesha is also capable of transmuting sensuous and mundane knowledge and experiences into pure awareness which could have its origin in Buddhi-Manas, the spiritual awareness. This happens when the same is recognized as reflections of the Atmic Core, or of the will of the Solar Logos. Both these possibilities are present under Ashlesha. The stellar forces impinging upon the individual under this asterism agitate the inner as well as the physical self. Often the individual under its impact may superficially appear placid and free from worldly

- (1) *Psychology and Alchemy*, Carl G. Jung. (Tr. R.F.C. Hull), Princeton, press 64
- (2) *Ibid.*, pp 292-302

anxieties and emotional turbulence, but in reality he is not so. There is much conflict, distractions of mind, stormy emotional upheavals and disenchantments. Once these are perceived as the inevitable expressions of the evolutionary process and passing phase in the egoic journey, when the inner consciousness has succeeded in establishing a link between the superconscious and the conscient. Ashlesha then unfolds its serenity of motherly benedictions. At that stage, one awakes to find oneself as an important component of "the limited Infinity".

Ashlesha is presided over by the Nagas. Literally, the word Nagas means 'serpents', but these serpents are not of the common variety. They are special serpents, they belong to the species on whose crown rests the earth. In occult literature, the word Stands for the "wise men or the Adepts". They are regarded as the tutelary spirits or the gods of the five regions or the four points of the compass representing the externalized universe and the centre, as the guardian of the five lokas and four oceans". They dwell in the Patala Loka, the nether world. Esoterically, the Nagas represent the wisdom deeply entrenched in the inner cavity of one's heart, which could be reached only after traversing several regions of (psychic) darkness and overcoming many Gods of Temptations. Once approached and harmonious rapport established with them, the Nagas impart to their guest visitor the rare wisdom which could open the darkest mysteries of life; they also make a gift of the Kundalini Shakti, the Serpent Fire, the most powerful latent force in Nature. The regency over Ashlesha by these highly mysterious deities reveals its extraordinary sensitivity to supernal spiritual powers inaccessible to ordinary common individuals but once approached, aroused and controlled, they carry the dauntless inquirer across the waters of life without any difficulty. The individual could then extricate Truth from darkness of the subconscious and ascend with it to the superconscious to regain one's lost splendor. The superintendence of the Nagas over this asterism ensures that the heightened sensitivity, susceptibility to sensuous delight and ego-centred intellectualism are moulded in such a manner that the urge to explore the deeper layers of one's being and to unravel the hidden Reality in existence is aroused. It is through this urge inspired under the Nagas and the fullness of intelligence acquired under Pushya that the ego is prepared to establish a link between the conscient and the indwelling spirit within. This may take a long time and the ego may have to pass through several transformations before the chrysalis is changed into a butterfly. But once this change has occurred, there is a radical transformation in the psyche. At the stage, the ego Stands face to face with its archetype. In the words of Professor Jung, "with the active Intervention of the intellect, a new phase of unconscious process begins: the conscious mind must now come to terms with the figures of the Unknown Woman ("anima"), and the Unknown man ("the shadow"), the wise old man ("mana personality") and the symbol of the self"¹. All such changes become possible because the ego is prepared and is provided with the necessary resources and wherewithals by the Nagas, Buddhi-Manas, (Mercury), Aditi, Brahmanapati, and lastly by Surya who presided over Karkatakam.

This is the ultimate goal towards which Ashlesha prepares the ego. In the meantime, it enables the ego to recognise the veil of materiality produced by the Avarana Shakti and it dimly arouses the egoic perception of the power of wisdom represented by the Nagas. The impulse ends with the inspiration and the intense aspiration to return to one's Original Source. It provides encouragement for the return of the Prodigal Son.

But the journey is yet incredibly long. The close association of Mercury and the Nagas with Ashlesha unveils the acme of egoic possibilities, provides it with necessary impetus and insight to retrace the path. In Occult literature, a serpent, an earring, an undulating coil or an umbrella referred to Kundalini Shakti, which is one of the secret powers latent in human individuals, living dormant at the base of the spinal column and coiled like a serpent. In Mystery Schools where the aspirants to Wisdom are secretly prepared for spiritual unfoldment, the necessary training is imparted for the unfoldment and activation of this power. Initiation in such Schools in secret Wisdom is imparted during Cancer impulse but under

the regency of the Nagas. Ashlesha indeed disjoins; it separates the rapidly immaterialising egos from the deeper layers of materialism and pushes them to the earthly battlefield wherein they struggle to extricate themselves from their material sheaths and to attain the clarity of vision. This struggle ends with Jyestha, under the Tamasic impulses where the ego succeeds in activating its Kundalini Shakti and commences its final assault under Sattwic impulses accompanied by the trials and tribulations of a Neophyte.

(1) *Psychology and Alchemy*: op. cit., p. 89

TAMASIC ATTRIBUTE

The Tamasic Guna or the inertial attribute covers the second phase of egoic unfoldment. It extends from Leo to Scorpio; it covers nine asterisms from Magha to Jyestha. During this phase the egos already embedded in deepest layers of materiality covered with the veil of spiritual ignorance, avidya, pride of the physical form, '*dehabhiman*', and egotism, '*ahamkara*', strive to extricate themselves from their involuntary impulses and proceed towards their Original Source. This phase of the journey is replete with heart wrenching vicissitudes. They are however, guided by very powerful deities and *Pitris*, the ancestors, who have already crossed the shores and know the pitfall. Those who fail to overcome the materialistic attractions continue their terrestrial cycle once again even during the following phase of Sattwic impulsion; but for the victors the third stage of the journey brings much laurels and spiritual development. As the journey from Magha to Jyestha is related with our everyday life and its turmoil faces most of the individuals, it is the most important part of the egoic unfoldment. But the available information with regard to this phase of journey is very restricted specially with a view to protecting the unwary individuals. Even a little knowledge relating to this part of the journey may be of immense value to those who desire to understand the basic motivating forces impinging on them and the difficulties they have to surmount to succeed in their mission.

Once the ego is individualized and separated from the general stream of movement, the memory of its pristine nature and primeval source which has sunk into the deepest layers of materiality is completely obliterated. It is extremely difficult to revive the memory unless the veil of spiritual ignorance, pride of the physical form and egotism are removed. The struggle during the Tamasic stage of unfoldment is connected with this task. Only when the involuntary evolution is arrested and the seer-will is developed to impose voluntary control over life's forces that the individual could establish a link between the conscient and the Superconscient. If the individual is able to understand the subtle hints of nature, it could be possible for him to transmute his difficulties into opportunities and be able to uncover his latent powers. Jyestha, the last asterism in this series, marks the culmination of this achievement. If the individual's attractions for his terrestrial relationships and acquisitions have weakened, there is much hope for him during the following phase of his unfoldment. The task during the Tamasic phase of unfoldment is to transmute the nature of man: He has to learn to control his involuntary impulses with his seer-will and establish the supremacy of voluntary control on his life. He has to expand the horizon of his sympathies and include within his consciousness the wholeness of life. The various difficulties faced by him are expected to give him an intimate understanding of deeper aspects of life. During this process he has to transcend his physical limitations and deprivations in order to comprehend the hidden laws of Nature and to develop his latent faculties. He also has to get a vision of the indwelling spirit in the cavity of his heart. The expansion of sympathies and development of intellect should lead him to unify himself with the central source of power, wisdom and happiness. These lie in the Solar Logos, the central core of existence, represented by the Sun and then reflect this understanding in his everyday life. This implied that there should be clarity of his Buddhi Manas, Pure Intelligence. The four zodiacal signs comprising the nine asterisms in this series attempt to bring these changes. Every event in the life of an individual under these impulses should be analysed and understood in relation with this task.

LEO (Simha)

(106°40'- 120°00')

The fifth zodiacal sign signified by Leo makes the individual very self-cantered. The existing conditions of life do not satisfy him. The distant goal, Truth or Reality, eludes him. Such a Situation makes his personal life very uneasy. In fact whenever the stellar impulses begin to intone the message of the ultimate destiny, or whenever the attraction of the Original Source becomes acute, the karmic forces generated during the earlier phase of egoic development begin to confront him accentuating their restrictive influences. In such a confused State, self-centredness asserts its sway and the Leo ascendants fail to listen to the voice of the Soul. These individuals are so much entrenched in their material sheaths and terrestrial involvements that they fail to locate the source of the inner voice. They do not recognize the reality of the universal self as distinct from their individual self. The voice of the inner spirit is often considered by them as ensnarement meant to delude them from their path of self-righteousness.

The Leo impulse makes one feel that nothing worthwhile could exist outside him. The consciousness at this stage is primarily fixed at the level of intellect which shows the shifting of consciousness from the inner core of the being to the periphery of one's existence.

Under the Leo impulse, the individualization of egos makes them feel that they are the acme of creation and there could be nothing better or higher than they. Such psychological perversions produce much delusion inducing them to have little regard for others. They consider the entire manifestation for their convenience, pleasure, sense-gratification and for providing them the best opportunities for their growth and expansion. This concentration of consciousness on their own (little or separated) self challenges the universal evolutionary forces and activates the past karmic impediments. Ego-centric karmas are unhelpful in unfolding the inner reality and so far the egos have been accumulating such karmas in abundance. When the distant goal begins to intone and the inner being begins to aspire to advance towards that goal, the past karmas arisen by self-centred activities create immense impediments. When the ego centric karmic impediments begin to manifest, the individuals meet insurmountable difficulties in their everyday life. The intonations of the inner-self confronted by the promptings of the material sheaths get confused; when such a mind meets the karmic impediments, the frustration is greatly intensified.

The Leo impulse makes the ego so much identified with its material sheaths that it becomes oblivious of the intonations of its inner spirit; the indwelling spirit tries to assert itself through every action and remind it of the immense opportunities awaiting for it through every Situation, yet the ego seems to be gliding uninterruptedly with the terrestrial stream as if under unconscious inertial momentum. The voluntary determination to extricate oneself from the flow seems almost absent under the great rush of past karmic forces generated during the earlier phase either as a member of a group or as an isolated being. The Leo impulse firmly makes the ego strongly linked with the phenomenal existence. The past karmic forces greatly circumscribe its universe of experiences and it functions as if unconsciously in the imprisoned cage of illusion. His area of Operation consists of narrow grooves which are often unable to accommodate the inner cravings and aspirations.

The Tamasic phase of stellar impulsion intensifies egotism, loss of memory of one's divine heritage and attachment with one's physical form. The self-centredness of the individual activated the karmic forces, aroused the thirst for sensuous experiences and highly exaggerated notion about one's intellect and individual prowess; it weakened the link between the universal consciousness and the individualized self. It is a very complicated phase of development. For this reason every description of Leo, Virgo, Libra and Scorpio signs eludes well defined description of their impact. Even predictive astrology talks of them very vaguely. The same is true even of the asterisms comprising them.

The nine asterisms included in this group have very difficult tasks to perform. They have to inculcate the reality lying beyond the phenomenal existence but the egos during this phase are much attracted to sensuous gratification and thirst for sentient experiences: they are so much deluded by the existing conditions of material world that they consider it as the supreme reality. They resist every intonation from the noumena or the formless base of the existence, from the eternal Void, even when received it is intensely resisted. The resulting conditions whether at the physical level or at the psychological one are not amenable to easy predictions or to deciphering of their motivating forces. The perversions and distortions caused by astro-mental repercussions caused by delusion and inertial karmic forces greatly upset the terrestrial existence of the individuals. They are very much busy but at the slightest leisure they become psychologically maladjusted within their environment. Such conflicts stifle the inner voice and obscure the expressions of their pristine innocence. The inner voice however, continues till his very end which makes the life of Leo ascendants always restless. Even at the height of their achievements, they feel that they miss something important in life though they may not be able to identify the same. This Situation continues till the original freedom is gained and pristine innocence, primeval Light and puissance are achieved.

The Tamasic forces are always at war with Sattwic impulses. The conflict between the inner intonations and terrestrial attractions is ever present during the next nine asterisms. In spite of powerful impact of these attractions, the undercurrent of spirituality is perseveringly engaged in dispelling the illusions and giving clear guidance to the ultimate destiny. The indwelling spirit always intones the ego to grapple with the sensuous experiences and arouse the voluntary impulses, the seer-will. The individualization occurring at the culmination of Ashlesha which greatly intensified egotism in the person resists the spiritualizing impulses to such an extent that the ego has to pass through much

serious strife during Magha to Jyestha phase of its journey. The everyday life of a common man is full of sorrows and difficulties due to this psychological storm at the inner plane. These struggles continue till the inner reality is recognized and firm decision is taken by the ego to align itself on the side of Truth. A radical change occurs in the individual with this determination and it begins to struggle harder to grapple with its materialistic restrictions caused by its thick materialistic sheaths.

The Leo impulse marks the beginning of an important phase in egoic unfoldment. The thick veil of materiality acquired during the Rajasic phase created delusion and spiritual ignorance. But they have to be gradually eliminated. That is the task for the next nine asterisms. The differentiation made during the latter phase of Rajasic impulses created many complications, but they have to be removed. The self-centredness of the egoic consciousness accompanied by identification with one's several material sheaths aroused pride as well as delusion of the self (physical form of the body as reality) as the actor in the terrestrial drama and the power behind everything that takes place in the phenomenal world. Important features of egoic manifestation at this stage are vanity, delusion, egotism, acquisitive tendencies, and disregard of the feelings, emotions and rights of others. These traits of the individual generate much karmic impediments.

The sun rules over the sign. It makes Leo very powerful. The spiritualizing effect of the sign is however, clouded by a thick material veil produced by past Karmic forces. The inner spirit energised by the sun attempts to peep through the veil and to assert itself. The vanity of the superficial or the little self thwarts the efforts of the inner being. There is a conflict between these two forces: the vanity of the outer superficial self tries to silence the inner voice while the inner sun tries to blaze forth through the veil of the outer personality. These two forces are irreconcilable. Their interaction produces much conflict leading to serious psycho-mental complications. The individual becomes impervious under this impact to saner advice of the eiders. He does not harmonize either with human eiders or with divine guides.

The solar radiance at Leo created an unfortunate and unintended illusion. The solar effulgence dazzled the various sheaths over the inner scintilla. Immature egos often mistake it as an indication of their advanced egoic Status. The impact of solar radiation on the various sheaths greatly increased their impact at the phenomenal level. The individual as a result: earned much credit and admiration from the people. His centre of attention directed to his material sheaths and their extraordinary Performance in the world often made him feel that he was getting spiritually evolved. His Performance in the outer World is sometimes so stupendous that he becomes megalomaniac. He does not understand the real Situation and the real cause of his material achievements. He begins to consider that the achievements are in tune with his inner being and with his ultimate mission. He is in this manner waylaid from his real mission. He begins to strive for greater material possession and increased involvement in the phenomenal existence.

The Leo impulse finally makes the individual disappointed. He suffers towards the end of his life. The mundane acquisitions and social Status do not last for long, They are incapable to stifle the inner intonations. The agitation in various material sheaths after sometime subsides. The Opposition of the outer sense gratification to the inner intonations flashing the ultimate egoic mission becomes feeble and the latter gradually becomes overpowering. The hold of the material sheaths on the consciousness of the individual becomes loose. There occurs a change in consciousness. When the significance of the intonation becomes clearer, the individual begins to feel the impermanence of the hold of material sheaths. He now feels like rising from a Stupor and withdraws his consciousness from his material sheaths. This stage produced the important feeling of disappointment. It becomes an important milestone in the egoic journey. Once the psychological orientation is complete and there is change in the direction of egoic pursuits, the necessary guidance sometimes from unknown sources becomes available. This is the unique possibility at Leo stage, which affects the following course in the egoic journey.

The Leo impulse makes the ego highly creative. The conflict and struggle for excellence along with the intonation of its indwelling spirit motivate the ego to many different kinds of expression at various levels of existence. There is no greater unhappiness for such egos than idleness, sloth and lethargy. The process of individualization has already made them highly sensitive; they isolate themselves from the mainstream of social organisations and refrain from mingling with the masses. They are averse to all forms of group-life, although they may like to be a leader of such collective arrangements. Their identification with physical self and awareness of the external world accentuated their materiality on

which touchstone they evaluated all their experiences. It very much distorted their outlook. It makes them much ensnared by materiality of every experience and every Situation. They recognize and value even the beneficence of spirit in terms of material gifts and rewards. They interpreted even their materialistic attainments in terms of spiritual attainments and as an expression of their spiritual evolution. Such complicated psychological nature made the task of the guardians of egoic evolution, the Pitris or the Ancestors, very tough. The manner in which these egos are carried further is to a large extent indicated by Magha, Purva Phalguni and Uttara Phalguni asterisms.

MAGHA

(120°00'-133°20')

Magha radically changes the evolutionary direction of the egos. The Rajasic impulses extricated the egos from cosmic dormancy, provided them with various elements and conditions of life which differentiated them from universal consciousness, made them individualized and put them under the veil of materiality. Magha heightened the isolation, intensified the self-centredness and accentuated the intonations of their inner core, the voice of the indwelling spirit. Thus when the egos entered Magha they were individualized, self-centred, sensitive to external sensations and thirsting for self-gratification. When Aditi circumscribed the manifestative impulses and imposed the limits beyond which the egos could not further evolve, the primeval life-essence striking at the outer fringe recoiled within itself. Magha made each of these striking divine spark highly individualization, specified an area for its Operation and made the ego self conscious. The emerging sparks which had operated in an open matrix prior to Ashlesha produced karmic forces, sensations and experiences whose impact was diffused all over the group but under Magha, these karmic forces and various experiences began to manifest in marked individualization manner. The individual now began to register and confront them in an isolated manner. The personalised consciousness with its past accumulations manifested as egotism; it aroused much pride in the individual. He became self-seeking; the veil of ignorance, avidya, became intensified. The process of individualization personal life signified great involuntary involvements with karmic relationships, much more intense desire for personal experiences and sensations and greater delight in personal achievements. The individual wanted to carve out a *niche* for himself. With every increased impetus for personal achievement, the karmic forces became increasingly intensified and very complicated. Magha, on the one hand, linked the egos with their past but on the other hand, made them very personal, pushing forward for attaining greater freedom. The primary motivation for such egos came from their thirst for personalised experiences, *Trishna*. The concretised physical and astro-mental sheaths became the reservoir for all the reactions to such efforts. The consciousness working through various sheaths became greatly hardened with self-centredness. The psychomental nature of the individual became coloured by illusory ideas, which incapacitated him from seeing clearly. He could not have right vision. Contradictions in his behaviour and complete ensnarement by attraction of materiality of the surrounding conditions made it very difficult for the inner spirit to express itself freely at the conscious level.

Magha has a much deeper significance on the pattern of the individual's behaviour. The very word Magha implies 'an island', 'a division of the universe, and 'a kind of drug or medicine'; it also means 'pleasure'. These by themselves are not very revealing indications of the nature of the asterism unless we explored deeper in their significance. The Vedic seers named the asterism so because the universal life-essence at this phase of egoic evolution becomes so isolated as to make it seem an island separated from the whole existence with a nucleus of personal thirst for sensate existence and attracted by experiences and sensations at different levels for its own sense gratification. The Separation from the group or from the prevailing mores and popular thought currents often makes the individual nucleus of consciousness seem original and unique in many ways, nonetheless, it is marooned and has to seek its inspiration from within itself. It makes the life very trying. Even medicine as a meaning of the word has deeper connotations revealing only indirectly the characteristics of the asterism. A medicine is applied when a patient suffers from some malady; from spiritual Standpoint, the immersion of the ego in materialism with thick veils cast over its perception of reality is a serious affliction. The Magha impulsion attempts to eradicate this ailment.

The asterism occupies the borderline between Rajasic and Tamasic impulsions; the former produced individualization consciousness, which made the ego an island or a division of the universe, and it obtained a well-defined parameter, Hiranyagarbha, to work within it. It also obtained various sheaths around its primeval spark, which clouded its pristine innocence and power. The various sense

experiences aroused vibrations in its different sheaths, which gave it new thrills. The pleasure principle active under Magha was possible as a result of the special sequence of evolutionary impulses. At Magha, the emphasis was on astro-mental sensations along with self-consciousness, self-centredness, instilled in the ego a questioning mind curious to understand the significance of every experience whether at the objective or at the subjective level of existence. It also made the individual inquire into the ensnaring process and the causes of dissatisfaction following every gratifying experience. Such an enquiring astro-mental nature after a long journey acquiring varied experiences in different areas led the individual to seek his release from this bondage of terrestrial existence. Although primarily an asterism leading to sensual gratifications and physical pleasures, by developing and directing the astromental nature towards enquiring into the details of the existing conditions it led the ego towards redemption from involuntary bondage of births and deaths. In this sense, Magha is considered by the spiritualists a medicine for the egoic malady.

The four quarters of Magha ruled by rapidly moving planets namely, Mars, Venus, Mercury and Moon are concerned with externalisation, Sensation, mentation and conceptualisation respectively. These are Operations which affect the expansion and intensification of one's consciousness. Under Magha, the individual derived his pleasure more from his intellectual thrill than from physical sense gratifications. These four planets are also related with expressing the solar puissance. Under Magha, the ideas move very fast, reflect ideals of the highest order and reveal very pointedly the hypocrisies and contradictions of everyday life and social relationships. The veil of materialism working at this stage however, distorts the purity of these experiences; the solar illumination being received only through the surrounding matter and experienced through the inertial tendency of sloth, lethargy and enjoyment of pleasant sensations, the inner glow of the indwelling spirit is not truly reflected though it is constantly affecting the ego. It is for this reason that the movement towards the deeper layers of materiality which in many ways is accentuated under Magha contains within itself the antidote. Moon which rules over its fourth quarter activates intelligence; it sows seeds of disenchantment with sensuous pleasure. The asterism itself is ruled by Ketu which prepares the astromental sheaths for incisive enquiry and much insightful analysis. In due course it intensifies the discriminatory powers of intellect and leads the ego towards disinterestedness with every Tamasic phenomenon. Ketu is the 'Vision Power' of the Sun. It is knowledge in abstraction. It reveals the distant goal as well as the essential nature of manifestation. It is the repository of Karmic experiences. Ketu produces two contradictory trends: one leads to intensification of material involvement, intellectual Sensation, pleasure born of physical and astro-mental vibrations, and the other trend reveals the awareness of the futility of such mundane experiences. Ketu constantly reminds the individual of the final destiny awaiting him. It impresses upon him the necessity and validity of ethical conduct. The incompatibility of these two impulses accentuates the Leonine conflict often experienced as dissatisfaction at the subjective level in spite of egotism and pleasure-seeking behaviour in everyday mundane transactions.

The Vedic deities presiding over Magha are the Pitris, the ancestors. They are the illumined ones who have themselves crossed the trials and tribulations of human existence. They have effectively resolved the contradictions confronting the individualization egos. Pitris discovered the Light, possessed the Thought and the Word which formed the foundation of manifestation; they conquered Immortality. They traveled through the secret worlds of the luminous Bliss. But having reached the Truth, they remained with the struggling humanity to resolve their conflict, to show them the path and release them from the maze of the complicated karmic forces. Pitris are aware of the intricacies obstructing Tamasic forces which produce temptations and obscurities. They are aware of the confusion, delusion and temptations which are important ammunitions in the armoury of Dugpas, the sorcerers on the path of enlightenment, who confuse the inexperienced egos from the path of self-awareness. Pitris try to hold back the forces of ignorance, remove the impediments created by such mental distractions and guide the humanity affected by materiality of sense-gratification. They steer the struggling egos baffled by their new personalised experiences. They encourage and inspire the individuals to move towards their ultimate destiny full of Light, Power and immortal Delight.

The presence of Pitris at this crucial crossroad is very significant. They preserve and sustain the previous Rajasic impulses to flow as the subterranean Channel through the consciousness of the individualization egos urging them to move forward dauntlessly, gradually immersing in the deeper layers of materiality and registering diverse experiences but at the same time, activating their mind which enabled them to analyse their experiences, discern the nature of different vibrations and envision the possibility of a different goal of life than the material expansion and sense gratification. The Pitris intone warnings against delusions, urge the egos to transcend the limitations of their present sheaths

and vivify the luminosity of the distant goal awaiting them. The Pitris however, know that the egos have to complete their evolutionary path; they have to carry on their long pilgrimage alone; they can either expedite or slow down the speed but they cannot step out of it or follow the reverse direction. The egos have to learn these lessons the hard way during their Tamasic course of evolution. They have to begin their lessons by themselves at Magha which makes the ego an island, a division of the universe, seeking pleasures and sense gratifications but Magha also imparts to the ego the drug or the medicine to cure its afflictions, to transcend the obscurities and delusion created by pleasure or Sensation seeking self-centered intellect.

PURVA PHALGUNI

(133°20'-146°40')

Purva Phalguni is not radically different from Magha under which the Pitris prepared the egos to face their trials, vicissitudes and delusions met on the path and inspired them to persevere with their journey, yet under Purva Phalguni some significant differences can be deciphered. Magha was symbolized by a palanquin whereas Purva and Uttara Phalgunis together were represented by a cot. The former is a means of locomotion; It is carried by four or six men who carry it on their Shoulders and these men have to be very careful of the conveniences of the person travelling in the palanquin. The cot on the other hand is used for sitting or rest and sleeping. Both Magha and Phalgunis are concerned with the convenience and comforts of the egos but the gay abandon which the individual enjoys under Phalguni is different from conscience-stricken pleasures under Magha. The word Phalguni itself signifies the attitude of being in a State of animation aroused by something ethereal.

The word Phalguni is related with the Sanskrit words which mean 'non-essential'; it is connected with the festival of colours heralding the advent of spring when trees are covered with new, fresh leaves and flowers. The human beings are filled with sensuous feelings; they pine for love and affection. These words which formed the basis for the word Phalguni are also used for Arjuna, the hero of Mahabharata, and for the planet Jupiter. These associations suggest that the Phalgunis produce new experiences of inner life, There is some expectation of thrill and gay abandon. There is a feeling that these are non-essential events yet they are performed for some ethereal goal which however, may not be distinctly recognized at that time. The division of Phalguni impulses between Purva and Uttara poses certain metaphysical questions which are not very easy to answer. When do these feelings arise? Does happiness arise at a definite point of time which is flanked by Purva (earlier) and Uttara (latter)? In fact, from astrological viewpoint, these two asterisms refer to certain important stages of evolution when the evolving egos take delight in immersing themselves in surrounding material conditions but with some recognition of their no-essentiality. The central motivating impetus of these asterisms is deciphered more distinctly by studying their relationships with the signs in which they are posited and the planets as well as the deities who are related with them.

Purva Phalguni lies within Leo which is ruled by Sun. The asterism itself is ruled by Venus whereas the Vedic deity Bhaga presided over it. Its four quarters are controlled by Sun, Mercury, Venus and Mars. At this stage of egoic growth, material vibrations activate sensuous temperament in a marked way. The Vedic deity Bhaga accentuated the pleasure principle derived from egoic immersion in material surroundings yet he enabled the ego to recognize the possibility of Immortal Delight beyond the personal sensual perception. The present stage of bliss is attained by creative action and from experiences arising from material involvements. There is little frustration or disenchantment with material conditions of life. The ego desires to dilly-dally at its existing conditions; it 'rests' in its material surroundings living a life primarily motivated by the thirst for pleasures of life.

Purva Phalguni does not produce conflict between one's material involvement and the spiritual heritage rather one begins to take delight in one's pleasures. The Vibration from Venus intensifies his desire for sensuous pleasure which even makes him a little disinterested in his ultimate destiny. He thinks that the physical action—the discharge of one's mundane responsibilities and obligations as he thinks them to *be*—is sufficient for his redemption. He considers that his actions on the physical plane will take him to his final goal. An important characteristic of his temperament is his concern with his creative activities rather than with their end-results. He derived his pleasures from his involvement with his creativity itself.

The regency of Bhaga over Purva Phalguni contributes to the immersion of the evolving entity in deeper layers of materiality, provision of greater opportunities to experience new delights in diverse

activities and to envision cosmic harmony and its laws. The changes in consciousness under the Phalgunis as indicated earlier, basically remain the same but they reveal two aspects of the same impulse. Purva is presided over by Bhaga whereas Uttara is under Aryamana and both the deities are Guardians of the Light. Bhaga is the godhead who brings the illimitable joy of Truth, the infinity of one's being and the supreme felicity into human consciousness. He is said to be the divine enjoyer in man. But Aryamana who is also a Pitri and the Guardian of the Path, primarily assisted others on their path, in their battles and their aspirations. The domain of Aryamana extends beyond Leo. In Leo only one quarter of Uttara Phalguni is present; the remaining three quarters of the asterism extend into Virgo, the sixth sign of the zodiac which also has its own significant influence.

The influence of these two Vedic deities namely Bhaga and Aryamana makes the intellectual development of the evolving egos very rapid. They also push forward the emerging egos with great gusto. But the thickening veil of materiality and the excitement of new experiences generate much karmic forces which the egos have to work out. When the egos move from Leo to Virgo, the egotism of the individual is much intensified. It occurs importantly under Magha as well as Purva Phalguni. The latter one has its four quarters ruled by Sun, Mercury, Venus and Mars while the asterism as a whole is under Venus. Venus is the priest of asuras, the demons, who took great delight in Tamasic pleasures; Bhaga, the presiding deity over the asterism is also related with pleasure principle. The individuals have by now developed sense organs as well as evolved intellect; the planetary rulership of different quarters of the asterism aroused in these individuals intense craving for repeating the various experiences gained at different levels. These are primarily experiences of Tamasic nature seeking sensuous delight involving the egos in greater karmic bondage. Magha produced personalised identity under such an impact, it led to self-centred nucleus of consciousness gathering different physical experiences; Ketu which imparted the vision of Truth aroused in it frustration with existing conditions, and the Pitris carefully guided the struggling individuals further on their journey but the Magha impulse on the whole made the individual psychologically disturbed. The conditions changed under Purva Phalguni. Ketu's disturbing influence was eliminated. Venus, which ruled over Purva Phalguni, was significantly different from Ketu. Venus was very sensitive but it was primarily related with physical form of existence whereas Ketu was concerned with abstractions and with mentation. Even the nature of Bhaga was different from the Pitris ruling over Magha, although both of them were Guardians of Light. As a result of these differences Purva Phalguni led to greater involvement in karmic bondage which made the task of extricating the ego from materiality more difficult. Purva intensified inertial movement, accentuated material immersion, impelled the individual to seek repetition of Sensation and made withdrawal of the inner spirit from the outer casements more difficult.

Under such Situation, Bhaga, the Vedic deity presiding over Purva Phalguni, had a very onerous responsibility. Despite its accentuation of the pleasure principle in life, it strengthened the intonations of Immortal Delight howsoever, faint its voice could be at this stage and by this process Bhaga vitalized the staggering spirit under the sensuous attractions.

One of the functions of this godhead is to help the ego from succumbing to the ensnarement of worldly pleasures and sensations, to impart to it the necessary strength to extricate itself from such indulgence and to show to it the vision of enduring celestial happiness. Bhaga guides the ego towards Immortal Delight. The individual under his charge initially feels indolent to stir himself but the deity over the longer duration strengthens him to fight his indolence, and other darker forces on the path, and to make him ever involved in creative activities. While doing so, the presiding deity Bhaga does not minimize the hold of egotistic feelings. Under Purva Phalguni, the individual initially gets besmirched in material and sensual pleasures but Bhaga gradually shows him the possibility of more enduring delight. The vision of happiness shown by this godhead is eternal happiness of Immortality, of Atmic Light and of the wealth of Truth. Such a vision of light, power and happiness arouses inner strength, greater enthusiasm and joyous endurance for facing the ordeals of the Path. Under Magha, there was disenchantment as well as illumination, while Purva Phalguni emphasized the transitoriness of human experiences and sensual gratifications, and it implanted the vision of everlasting possibility of bliss and beatitude which intensified 'the individual's creativity and increased his sensitivity. Purva Phalguni fulfils the basic objects of Leo in a very significant manner: it impels creativity with a purpose, sensitivity with a goal, movement towards Divine Light and Power; it induces movement that gives exceptional thrill of joy, strength and spiritual (impersonal to a large extent) delight. Its presiding deity Bhaga produces a psychological State of the mind which is exemplified by a thirst for higher kind of pleasure in place of the physical one, the possibility of everlasting happiness in place of transitory sensuous gratifications. The subtle suggestions and vague intonations from within at this stage motivate

the individual to change. Such a psychological orientation enables the individual to take full advantage of the guidance by Aryamana presiding over the next asterism.

UTTARA PHALGUNI

(146° 40'-160° 00')

Uttara Phalguni covers the last 3°20' of Leo and first ten degrees of Virgo. It operates under the planetary rulership of Sun and under the regency of the Vedic deity Aryamana. Both of them radiate powerful spiritual impulses which vivify the supreme power of the inner spirit and arouse intense desire to transcend materiality surrounding the egos. As the four quarters of the asterism are controlled by Jupiter and Saturn, the ego passing through it does not experience an easy life: its struggle is intensified and physical relationships with others become emotionally and mentally strained. All the planets acting at the asterism either as a whole (Sun) or on its different quarters namely Jupiter and Saturn as well as the Vedic deity Aryamana presiding over it provide such powerful impetus flowing through the constellation that the life is much charged with so much of energy that the life of the individual sometimes becomes instable. A kind of whirlwind rises in the individual's mind.

The Sun acts very deeply and is related with the innermost spirit in man. Under its impact the individual does not feel satisfied with anything less than perfect. At this stage the egoic consciousness veiled under spiritual ignorance, avidya, intuitively feels the unreality of existing conditions, but it is precluded from the clarity of sight and from the purity of solar radiance. The penetrative intellect acquired under the solar impulse gets besmirched by astro-mental sheaths and proclivities of past karmic accumulations. There are vague intonations from the Atmic level that there is a way out of the maze; the Ariadne's thread to take him out of the labyrinth is however, not available to him. A state of bewilderment therefore arises and the ego is baffled at the dilemma. Aryamana enters under such a Situation to resolve the stalemate and to guide the traveler on his path.

Aryamana's special task at this stage is to save the traveler beset with conflict and despondency. He saves the individual from breakdown. He manages the conditions in such a manner that the individual's inner strength is revived. Aryamana illumines the mind, provides insight into Truth and removes despondency.* Aryamana is one

(*) Lord Krishna acted like such a guide to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra during the Mahabharata war.

of the four Guardians of light, the other three being Bhaga, Varuna and Mitra who protect the travelers to Supreme Delight. He is one of the twelve Adityas (+) possessing solar radiance; he is also a Pitri, and an Ancestor, who has himself traversed the path and knows its ordeals, pitfalls and snares which frequently confront the travelers on their way. His power to guide the explorer is immense. His guidance leads to the realization of the unreal nature of egotism. When Aryamana has imparted his knowledge and the same is imbibed by the individual, he (Aryamana) bestows wisdom, joy, vast expansion of consciousness and irresistible power to meet the ordeals on the path. Himself being primarily a guide to the traveler, Aryamana arouses the desire to explore and discover the purpose of life and for this attainment he gives encouragement and insight. The very word Aryamana is related with such words as Arya (respectful, excellent), Arya (persons of noble birth, one who follows laws and religion diligently), and ʾri (energy of six psychological perversions which disturb the mind namely, passion, anger, greed, pride, attachment and jealousy). Aryans were those who followed the Vedic culture and the gods who assisted them in their aspirations; They were the travelers who explored Truth, aspired for Immortality, offered sacrifices, Yajnas, to the deities and cooperated with higher beings. As a leader and guide of such people, Aryamana is one of the shining children of Light, he is a worshipper of the Masters of Truth and fights battles against the powers of darkness who obstruct the human journey to Bliss. Aryamana is the godhead in whose divine power the Aryanhood is rooted; he is the force of sacrifice, aspiration, battles, journey towards perfection, and of light and celestial bliss by which the path is created, traveled and pursued beyond all resistances and obstructers to its luminous and happy goal. Such a protector and guide towards the conclusion of Leonine impulse and when the ego is entering the realm of Virgo is a unique influence providing assurance for the successful outcome of the efforts made.

Uttara Phalguni is considered auspicious because it unfolds many new aspects of egoic nature. The first quarter of the asterism which still remains within Leo-impulse is ruled by Jupiter. It provides the essential vitality, Prana, which is essential for meeting the strain

(+) The 12 Adityas are: Aryamana, Mitra. Varuna, Indra, Vivaswana, Pushana. Vishwavasu, Arusr Bhaga, Tvastra, Vishnu. and Dhata (These are the 12 Adityas as giver, in Vishnu Purana.)

and stress of the path. This energy sustains the individual's enthusiasm when darker clouds of delusion and despondency gathered around him. The enormous amount of forces released under Jupiter enthused the ego to involve itself in much terrestrial activities. They lead to much karmic involvements many of which were produced by his egotism. The personality still revolved round the nucleus of the self-centredness which produced limitations and obstructions. With these involvements and guidance under Aryamana when the ego entered Virgo, it was confronted with several ordeals, resulting from the past karmic accumulations, the delusions of the burning ghat (aroused under Saturn which controlled the second and the third quarters of the asterism). Aryamana is still there to protect and guide the ego till it has acquired sufficient strength for its onward journey. The last quarter of the asterism under the Charge of Jupiter assured the ego strength and enlightenment needed for its further mission.

VIRGO (Kanya)

(150° 00'-180° 00')

Virgo comprising three asterisms namely Uttara Phalguni (three quarters of it extending over 10° of Virgo), Hastha (160° 00' -173°20') and Chitra (only two quarters of it extending from 173°20'to 180° 00') provides the most troublesome impulse during the course of egoic development. But it is one of the most mysterious signs as well. It stirs up the past ego-centric karmic forces in such a way that they are gradually resolved and the consciousness is purged of Tamasic impurities so as to enable the person to proceed further expeditiously. Virgo brings to consciousness the superconscient and motivates the individual to strive for the fulfillment of his objective. As this energy has to be harnessed from the innermost source, the Bythos or the Great Deep, it has to pass through various physical sheaths within which the consciousness has been encased for the present. It caused much pain. The various difficulties met under Virgo as indicated in predictive astrology are due to the counteraction between these two forces. But it is not the pain or the resistance aroused by the impulse which is so much significant from the ego's Standpoint as the attempt by the sign to purify the soul and to bestow it the newness of vision, elimination of antecedent impelling conditions and the psychological orientation induced by it for the new task. Virgo does not usher in or produce a new entity. It only incubates, nurtures the soul and unveils latent faculties for the impending contingency. Virgo is not concerned with any final result, rather it concentrates on generating power which could be useful for the task ahead. This impetus is fostered by the three asterisms that constitute this sign.

The mystic nature of Virgo is difficult to comprehend as it operates imperceptibly. It arouses the causes which make visible impact but itself it works behind the scene. Virgo is analogous to Nature, Prakriti, which has been variously described in different religious scriptures. The Egyptians called it *Isis* and the Greeks described it as the Cosmic Virgin. She personified the power of the Spring season, the power of the Earth to grow and yield grain, motherhood, and all the attributes and affinities which the spring signifies. The Cosmic Virgin or Prakriti in Indian metaphysics is personified Female Energy or *Shakti*, Nature.

The mystic nature of prakriti as represented by Virgo was described by T. Subba Row as the generative power of the universe. He stated that Isis, the great Cosmic Virgin, is the sixth principle of the cosmos. She is the generative power of the universe—not Prakriti, but the productive energy of Prakriti—and as such she generates ideation in the universal mind¹. As a generatrix of ideation in the universal mind, Virgo operates at the mental level, arousing psychological impetus and motivating the individual to function under it. The sign is active at the junction of thought and action, the former remains imperceptible at the background while its effects manifest in struggle of the ego and in a new realization. The Virgin or the Virgo sign represents the noumenal depth which contained the past karmic accumulations to be externalised later and resolved under karmic nemesis. Once resolved, the entity is released from its past encumbrances and is readied to accomplish great control over Nature, Siddhis, mentioned in Yogic literature. These Siddhis abide; in the Great Deep to surface when karmic impediments are removed and the individual has become de-personalised so as to use them for universal benefit. The racial, group and individual karmic Sediments are also stored at the same level.

These represent two sides of the same medallion but the siddhis can be attained only by precluding the impact of the other. When an individual enters the realm of Virgo, he is so much submerged under karmic accumulations that the finer forces of nature elude him. The resolution of past accumulations is not easy; the Virgo impulse induces the individual to transcend them so much courage and initiative are infused in him to make him move ahead and to take control of one's latent powers. The counteracting resistances create difficulties of many kinds depending upon the nature of karmic accumulations. The difficulties in everyday life experienced as physical illnesses, litigations and legal wrangles, sorrowful experiences, psychological aberrations and servitude are expressions of the friction between the upsurge of the inner spirit and resistances created by past karmic encumbrances. Only after the karmic nemesis is reached that the individual is free to proceed towards light (wisdom), power (strength) and immortal delight or Nirvana (liberation). The individual struggles at the present stage to overcome and become prepared for the ordeal ahead.

(1) Collection of Esoteric Writings, T.Subba Row Madras, p.215

Virgo is symbolized by a maiden (representing the mother principle) seated in a boat (representing the evolutionary course of life) holding in one hand a bundle of the stalk of grain (nourishment for the evolving soul) and in another a burning flame (the spiritual fire which inspires to attain Light and Puissance). In Sanskrit, the sign is known as Kanya which means a maiden in which all the potency for motherhood is present but she is not yet married. The stellar impulse flowing through this sign is protective, and inspiring but not yet manifesting the hidden potential. The sign provides all the spiritual and physical ingredients necessary for the evolutionary course although it does not lead to the final goal. The ego enters the sign under Uttara Phalguni presided over by Aryamana who knew the ordeals of the Path and guided the travelers. Under Hastha presided by Savitar, Which is another name of the Sun, the traveler is inspired to undertake his journey specially with confidence within his own self. This feature of the asterism is even symbolized by a human hand which represents confidence in oneself. The last phase of the sign under Chittra presided over by Tvastra, the celestial architect, impresses upon the evolving ego the clarity of its goal, and the archetype that the traveler is to attain. Under such support from these asterisms, Virgo intensifies courage, initiative and enthusiasm once the karmic nemesis is complete, and leads the pilgrim to the next Libra stage wherein he has to grapple with conflict between material attractions and spiritual cravings.

UTTARA PHALGUN (CONTD.)

(150° 00'-160° 00')

The three quarters of Uttara Phalguni (150° 00'- 160° 00') which extend into Virgo are continuation of the last portion of Leo. Aryamana still presides over the asterism; he functions as the guardian angel, protecting and guiding the pilgrim egos. The portion of the passage from Leo onward is full of pitfalls with temptations and trials lurking at every nook and corner. The egotism produced under Leo instilled self-confidence although the self-centredness associated with it generated much adverse consequences. The necessity to transcend the impact of thick veils of material sheaths emphasised the importance of experienced guardian. Aryamana is one of the four guardians of Light; he has sufficient knowledge of the trials and tribulations, attractions and temptations arising at various twists and turns of the path.

Aryamana is ever present to protect and guide, but he cannot minimize Karmic accumulations, he cannot even take the required decisions and actions on behalf of the egos. The individuals have to work out their karma alone, they alone can take the necessary Steps and face the ordeals. This makes the phase of the journey very strenuous. The karmic nemesis produced heart wrenching experiences, excruciating pain and it hurled severe blows intended to destroy egotism and open out the consciousness to the superconscious. The first phase of Virgo under Uttara Phalguni completely disorganises the personality and makes the individual stand almost alone on his own strength.

HASTHA

(160° 00'-173° 20')

Hastha extends from 160° 00' to 173° 20' of the zodiac. It lies completely within Virgo ruled by Mercury. The asterism itself is ruled by Moon. The four quarters of the asterism are regulated by Mars, Venus Mercury and Moon. All these planets are active on the psychological plane. Mercury and Moon are intimately related with mental activities. Moon functions also as a receptacle of cosmic energy.

Savitar, the presiding deity over Hastha represents an important aspect of the Sun. The stellar forces concentrated at this stage receive the creative influx of solar effulgence, activate the mind-principle and direct the cosmic forces towards strengthening the self-confidence and self-reliance of the individual. All the inspirations at this stage are received from the psycho-mental maturity, which accentuated one's faith in one's innate power and assurance for one's ultimate success.

The symbol of palm assigned to the asterism represents the outstanding qualities of an individual: the ego at this stage is struggling for power and enlightenment although the centre of its attention is still tethered to its self-hood, its sense of I-ness. An important feature of Hastha is sharpened intellect and capacity for detailed in-depth analysis of any Situation but it does not by itself direct the attention of the individual to any object that ought to be studied. The energised intelligence by itself is no Solution to human problems: only when a person is seized of a problem and seeks its answer that intelligence can guide. Hastha activates mind-principle but I-ness is so much entrenched in the personality that the question of self-realization eludes him. Savitar, the presiding deity of the asterism, represents the solar effulgence; its main function is to illumine, to reveal the Truth, to energise creative impulses, augment physical, mental and spiritual endowments. Unless the illumined mind is directed towards the immensity of the universe and the mysterious nature of the self, the veil of ignorance intensifying I-ness of the self accentuates the materiality of the personality rather than disclosing the hidden laws of Nature and the powers latent in man. Savitar can remove the mental obscurities and psychological impediments only on the initiatives of the (little) self. On being invoked for such a descent of the superconscious, Savitar will begin to dismantle the terrestrial fortresses of human attachments and obliterate wrong values. These are inevitably very painful, processes leading to the bleeding of the heart. Hastha under Savitar sustains the individual to withstand the blow courageously. The sustaining power of Savitar bestows perseverance, fortitude and psychological maturity. It also incorporates' faith in oneself, and assurance in one's own power to transcend the difficulties. That is what the palm as a symbol of the asterism represents.

Moon rules over Hastha. Moon supports the solar effulgence in transforming its influence to affect the psychological Constitution of the ego. Under Rajasic impulsion, Moon exposed the law of periodicity, provided the unit of time and infused the septenary principle in manifestation. The role of Moon under Tamasic impulsion is slightly different. It is still much concerned with nourishing the evolving entities but at this stage its role in reflecting the solar effulgence to activate the inner spirit and motivate it to take control over the personality is emphasised. As a result the past karmic accumulations are stirred up by the upsurge of the inner spirit, which begins to disconcert the physical relationships as well as the psycho-mental attitudes. Under the impact, the everyday life of the individual becomes hard. The personality begins to assert itself and the inertial movements fail to adapt with it. At the same time, Moon also imparts perseverance, a rare quality of the planet, which arises indirectly as a result of its association with Time. The solar effulgence produces Time; the presence of light and darkness is the cause of Space. The space exists only when there is presence or absence of solar rays. A special quality of space is the presence of some activity in it. Together Time and Space constitute the matrix of evolution, the duration without which progress is not possible. The lunar ownership of Hastha provides the arena where the personality can express itself. The upsurge of karmic impediments, the karmic nemesis, and the arousal of fortitude, exercise of seer-will are all possible at this stage because Moon as the cosmic generatrix produces the matrix in discharge of her role as Prakriti, Nature. The mystic possibilities of Virgo begin to surface at Hastha stage as a result of the interaction between Savitar (Sun) and Moon (Prakriti). All Siddhis, arousal of latent powers in man, arise at this stage as a result of the assertion of the egoic personality in its struggle to overcome its past karmic accumulations in order to integrate its psycho-mental faculties with its inner ethical demand.

The four quarters of Hastha ruled by Mars, Venus, Mercury and Moon gradually change the nature of man. Mars uplifts the heart and provides much energy for the austerities. Venus related with pleasure principle brings the individual in close relationship with the society. The increased sensitivity of the individuals is also tinged with ethical demand of the evolving spirit. Mercury leads to ratiocination, which enables the individual to evaluate his various experiences and give him insight into the working of the evolutionary forces. Moon bestows the vision of the ultimate goal. The various social obligations as well as other material experiences of the individual are assessed in the light of one's Spiritual Status. Hastha makes the ego-centric life of the individual break-open to his immediate surroundings. It provides him intellectual understanding of the task ahead. Hastha lends confidence and faith in oneself. It provides the necessary strength and energy to withstand the temptations likely to take place soon on the path.

CHITTRA

(173°20'-186°40')

The first half of Chittra lies in Virgo while the latter half extends into Libra. Under Chittra, the ego experiences radical psychological transformation. The asterism is ruled by Mars which bestows courage, fortitude and idealism; they provide the motive force to extricate oneself from the quagmire of materiality and the rigid grip of karmic accumulations. Mars also imparts the feeling of devotion and surrender to higher powers. The assurance in one's will-power and confidence in one's individuality developed earlier under Hastha gradually change into one's obeisance to one's inner-being, the indwelling spirit, even when the intonations from it is neither distinct nor very loud. The first two quarters of Chittra operating under Sun and Mercury support the Inspiration received from Mars.

Almost blind faith in righteousness of the life process and in divine justice in nature begins to take hold of the traveler. The Sun and Mercury dispel the illusion which created clouds of materiality and made the occasional flashes of solar illumination now possible. Highly abstract and difficult perception not possible of expression through spoken words is now brought to human consciousness. These two planets now begin to direct, give meaning and shape the relationships and strengthen the link between the higher trinity constituting Atma-Buddhi-Manas and the lower personality comprising the physical body, astral nature and terrestrial thoughts. The first half of Chittra bestows realism to the individual and reduces the illusion regarding his own self : Mercury and Sun play important role in it. At this stage severe blow is struck to demolish the main pillars of Tamasic proclivities namely egotism (Ahamkara), Spiritual ignorance (Avidya) and pride in one's own physical form (Dehabhimana).

Chittra is presided over by the Vedic deity Tvastra who makes the individual adapt himself to actual conditions of his surrounding. The inflated feeling of I-am-ness is willy-nilly ruptured. It happens due to personal disappointments, sorrows, deprivations or due to the realization taking place on account of one's intellectual development and in depth understanding of the life-process. Tvastra has the extraordinary power to produce this result. He is the celestial architect but he sheared the effulgence of the Sun to make him adapted to his wife Tvastri. He is described as the shearer of the Sun's radiance so as to make him bearable to his wife and to enable her to have offspring in his Company and thus become effective in the manifestative process. From the radiance thus taken off the Sun, Tvastra fabricated various divine instruments like the discus of Vishnu, trident of Shiva and so on. It was through these instruments that the gods who were constantly challenged by the demons could suitably meet them and thereby save the universe from destruction. The role of Tvastra at this stage is to reduce the individual to his real inner core and to make him creative. Under Chittra considerable chipping of the individual takes place. His exaggerated sense of importance is reduced and he is made realistic. The experience gained in the process developed fortitude, perseverance, and trust in divinity. The individual now begins to recognize super human or divine existence.

With such psychological orientation, the ego enters Libra. Virgo and Libra produce markedly different impulses but Chittra under Tvastra links the two streams of influences. Tvastra is also concerned with Immortal Delight, an aspect of the Supreme Godhead, Sachchidanand. The various ordeals under which the megalomaniac personality is cut-to-size are meant to instill in the person the sense of great delight. This change in actual life is experienced under the latter half of Chittra under the influence of Venus and Mars which control the last two quarters of the asterism. Under them the sagging strength of the individual is restored. Tvastra fashions the movement towards delight in man, brings him to health, youth, strength, wholeness of his personality and to the capacity of enjoyment. He is said even to restore youth to the aged. This psychological transformation takes place because the lower mind, the intellect in man, sheds its dense veil of illusion, grasps the Immortal Light and acquires the necessary accomplishments, Siddhis, to follow the light and to attain Liberation. Tvastra at first works at the physical level and with only the physical consciousness as well as with physical happiness or contentment, but later on, he produces from the same material other levels of consciousness namely vital energy, which aroused sense perception, mental and causal, or the metaphysical consciousness.

As a result of such changes, Chittra spreading itself between Virgo and Libra transformed the self-centred human consciousness to the level where it can perceive facts of universal life and experience the pleasure inherent in dismantling of the shell of one's self-centredness.

Chittra churns the consciousness, illumines the mind, gives vision of the ultimate destiny and differentiates the lower quaternary in its various constituents in order to adapt it to experience directly the different levels of Truth.

The last two quarters of Chittra under Venus and Mars bring the individual in direct contact with universal consciousness and thereby increase his physical sensitivity to a level where immense fount of love and happiness Springs up. Mars produced warmth and physical energy to manifest the divine love on the physical plane. These features are evident under Libra. At the Chittra stage however, many impulses are generated which may make the life unbalanced. The stability of the ego depends upon its absorptive capacity of divine outpourings occurring at Virgo and Libra signs. Under Mars and Tvastra, Chittra produces definite results but the Channels through which the result is obtained depend upon the karmic past of the individual. It is often mentioned that the outpourings at this level is known as Chittra because the word itself means bright or transparent but it also refers to a fairy as well as to a serpent. These are indirect suggestions to indicate that the Chittra outpouring could lead to painful as well as delightful precipitations depending upon one's past karma.

The asterism aims at exposing the image slumbering within the mortal coil, within the dead physical stones. When the asterism chips off the superfluous stones or arouses the life within much pain is naturally experienced but the amount of pain is commensurate with the outer coverings that have to be removed to bring out the inner beauty and the life within. When religious austerities are performed either voluntarily or involuntarily to attain some Siddhis, they necessarily produce painful physical and emotional experiences. In spite of such experiences, Chittra aims at producing the archetype destined for the individual. The word Chittra aims at producing the archetype destined for the individual. The word Chittra *interalia* means an image, or reflection; under this asterism the archetype latent within each individual which is the inner spark lying as nucleus of the individual's real or the inner being, forces the outer or the external conditions to dissolve. This is the karmic nemesis, which is essential so that the real image can be perceived and allowed to emerge. Under Virgo, Chittra represents the phase of trials and tribulations which under Libra opens the pleasanter aspects of it.

LIBRA (Tula)

(180°00'-210°00')

The seventh sign of the zodiac representing the acme of material hold on the evolving entity symbolised the stage which could either commence the spiritualising process or let the ego perish into the dreary Space, far from the luminaries of the objective universe. The sign for a long time was kept secret from the common people although the Initiates in the Secret Mysteries were quite familiar with it and its explosive possibilities. Any wanton meddling with the impulse could lead the capricious ego pushed towards oblivion under the momentum of the centrifugal impetus or it could even precipitate its assimilation in the great universal Soul if swept by centripetal force. In either case the purpose of the evolutionary manifestation would have been frustrated. It was the bounden duty of the seventh zodiacal impulse of cosmic transformation to keep the evolutionary momentum in balance. It was an onerous task. So in the interest of general welfare and the mysterious nature of the sign, the seventh sign was not revealed to unwary individuals and only ten sign of the zodiac was disclosed" for the general information. Every knowledge about Libra was suppressed and Virgo combined with Scorpio was given out as one sign.

The elusive amalgam of Virgo-Scorpio with Libra absent which made the zodiac only in ten divisions continued for long till the ancient Greeks are reported to have made it public. Even with this disclosure, H.P. Blavatsky thought that the real characteristics of the sign were not let out. She stated that the sign of Libra is credited as a later invention by the Greeks, but it is not generally stated that those among them who were initiated [into the secret Mysteries] had only made a change of names conveying the same idea as the secret name to those "who knew", leaving the masses as unwise as ever She further indicated that it was yet "a beautiful idea of their - this Libra, or the balance, expressing as much as could possibly be without unveiling the whole and ultimate truth. They intended to imply that when the course of evolution had taken the worlds to the lowest point of grossness, where the earths and their products were coarsest, and their inhabitants most brutish, the turning-point had been reached—the forces were at an even balance".

Indicating the nature of this balance, she indicated that "at the lowest point, the still lingering divine spark of spirit within began to convey the upward impulse. The scales typified that eternal equilibrium which is the necessity of a universe of harmony of exact justice, of the balance of centripetal and centrifugal forces, darkness and light, spirit and matter".

Libra as the name for the seventh sign of the zodiac is merely a blind. It represents the half-divine and half-terrestrial impulses generated at this stage of cosmic and human transformation. The interplay of such opposing forces makes it a battlefield for the struggling egos desirous of extricating their indwelling immortal spirit buried under the grossest and the coarsest veil of materiality. The challenging temptations of ephemeral relationships, sensations, desire for sensuous gratifications intensified by various vivified sheaths over the indwelling spirit and the developed intellect create intense pain when the divinity within is extricated from behind the terrestrial veils. The inner spirit cries for its release, the centripetal urges intone the ego to look homeward, but the momentum of Rajasic centrifugal impulses still induce it to move with the inertial stream. At this stage, the material temptations and the spiritual intonations are both so finely balanced that the individual is almost paralyzed between the two sets of equally tempting goals. Only the inner illumination and fiery enthusiasm could guide the individual away from such a difficult Situation.

Libra which extend from 180° 00' to 210 00' of the zodiac operates under the planetary rulership of Venus and is presided over by the Vedic deity Kuvera. The Sun is debilitated in this sign whereas Saturn is in its exaltation. These planetary associations with Libra epitomise its mystic nature on the one hand pointing to Heaven (Sun) balanced by the other pointing down to the earth (Saturn). The sign points to the boundless generation below with possibilities of boundless regeneration above both of which hinge on finely balancing sympathetic cord of egoic unfoldment. It could lead to limitless inner expansion provided its I-ness was transcended (Venus). The debilitation of Sun refers to the depth of solar descent; the inner spirit has sunk into the greatest material depth from which it has to be retrieved. It would require the most arduous preparations; it can be done only if the various

(1) *Isis Unveiled*, H.P.Blavatsky, California, Vol.11,p.457

sheaths casting their menacing influence over its effulgence are purified and well-integrated. The superiority of materiality suppressing (and stifling) the inner voice and solar effulgence is suggested by Saturn's exaltation in this sign. If much care is not taken and the elusive power of darkness (Saturn representing absence of light or veil over one's inner illumination) is not well guarded, the self-awareness of the soul could become a distant dream.

The astrological characteristics of the sign provides the clue for making use of the influence generated by the mystic cross-currents at this stage: by vivifying the sagging strength of Sun and transforming the materialistic nature of Saturn into its essential spiritualistic qualities. Enough hints have been given through these planetary associations with Libra which could guide the students of Yoga as to what further preparations they should do. The Sun represents the subjective essence of the inner man, the soul, which in the process of manifestation expresses itself as the Atma-Buddhi Manas or the higher Triad. It Stands for Supraconscious Intelligence and Abstract Thought. All the experiences acquired by ego are finally stored in higher Triad. After the material bases of the same are removed: one receives the voice of conscience, insight and invisible guidance from this nucleus of the being. The three higher principles connected with higher Triad are activated by nurturing the corresponding force centres, the Chakras, as they are known in Yogic literature. Vishuddhi or Throat Chakra which is connected with Mercury energizes the mind principle, Ajna or the Eyebrow chakra connected with Moon leads to the comprehension of the Divine Plan for the universe and men, while Brahmarandhra leads to Supreme Consciousness and is related with Sun and with Crown Chakra. The vivification of these three subjective principles leads to ascension to Heaven and assimilation of the universal beneficence. Saturn which is very powerfully situated in Libra controls physical manifestation. The objective or the physical form of the being comprising the physical body, the vital airs which energise it and the blood which circulates life-essence in the form are regulated respectively by Saturn, Jupiter and Mars. The three Force-Centres or the Chakras related- with them are Muladhara, Swadhistana and Manipura. They are the regulator of involuntary impulses in the human being. Various disciplines have been indicated in yogic practices which enable the individual to establish control over his body, emotions and thought. When the individual has understood the significance of corresponding austerities, he could establish control over his lower or the terrestrial triangle and make it fit enough to be subservient to the guidance of the higher Triad.

Venus, the planetary ruler of the sign, stands in the middle of these two sides of the beings, the subjective and the objective counterparts of his essential being. Venus is connected with Anahata Chakra or the Heart Centre. By expanding the circle of one's affinity, by destroying one's self-centredness and taking the world under one's wings of compassion the great integrating force of this planet is strengthened. When this is accomplished, Venus would succeed as the balance between one's higher goals in life and the physical assets he has secured. This is the essential message imparted by

Libra; it is this task for which the Libra impulses create various situations for the ego. Without such a balance the retrieval of the subjective Truth on the objective plane, for cosmic as well as human manifestation, could not be possible. It would have been the negation of the very purpose of manifestation if this goal was not achieved. The seventh sign of the zodiac in this sense serves as the kingpin in the evolutionary scheme. Describing the significance of this Operation in the natural scheme of evolution, both cosmic and human, and the role of Libra in it, H.P. Blavatsky mentioned as follows:

The centripetal and centrifugal forces, as Symbols of Good and Evil, Spirit and Matter, Life and Death, are also those of the Creator and the destroyer,—Adam and Eve, or god and the Devil, as they say in common parlance. In the subjective as well as in the objective worlds, they are the two powers, which through their eternal conflict keep the universe of spirit and matter in harmony. They force the planets to pursue their paths, and keep them in their elliptical orbits, thus tracing the astronomical cross in their revolution through the zodiac. In their conflict the centripetal force, were it to prevail, would drive the planets and living souls into the sun, type of the invisible Spiritual Sun, the Paramatma or great universal Soul, their parent; while the centrifugal force would chase both planets and souls into the dreary space, far from the luminary of the objective universe, away from the spiritual realm of salvation and eternal life, and into the chaos of final cosmic destruction, and individual annihilation. But the balance is there, ever sensitive at the intersection point. It regulates the action of the two combatants, and a double diagonal line in their revolution through Zodiac and Life; and thus preserving strict harmony, in visible and invisible heaven and earth, the forced unity of the two reconciles spirit and matter....'

The seventh sign of the zodiac is important because the ego, in order to survive and to strike its right note, has to strive to maintain its balance and endeavour to preserve strict harmony. At this point of intersection it has to undergo various transformations so as to produce the necessary adaptations and to acquire special qualities necessary for the task. These changes are signified by the various asterisms constituting the sign. Libra comprises two quarters of Chitra (180°00' -186°40'), the whole of Swati (186°40' -200° 00') and three quarters of Visakha (200° 00' -210° 00'). These asterism are ruled by Mars, Rahu and Jupiter and they operate under the Vedic deities Tvastra, Vayu and Indra-Agni. These asterisms prepare the egos traversing this region of stellar radiation for their future course. Tvastra gives the design of the future and makes then adaptable to objective conditions of existence to operate in creative way. Vayu is said to be the Lord of Life, a complex energy of consciousness which gives power to articulate all forms of manifestation. Indra is the illumined mind whereas Agni is the power of Seer-Will. The various deities related with Libra appropriately shape the life of the ego and bestow the necessary illumination and determination to proceed further in its task of retrieving its inner soul concealed in the veil of materiality and they do it without disrupting the universal equilibrium and harmony.

(I) *Isis Unveiled*, op. cit., Vol. II., p.463

CHITTRA (Contd.)

(173° 20'-186° 40')

The asterism, as already indicated before, prepares the ego in such a manner that the psychological transformation is gradual and the strain of the radical change is well under control. The nature of the stellar radiation is importantly altered from the previous one as the third and fourth quarters of Chitra begin to be controlled by Venus and Mars. They make the individual sensitive and pleasure seeking. The overall superintendence of Tvastra, as mentioned earlier, is to resolve the karmic accumulations which produces much pain; Tvastra also 'fashions the evolutionary movement towards delight in man, brings him to health, youth, strength, wholeness of his personality and to the capacity of enjoyment'. The former pain producing effect of Tvastra is evident more during the Virgo phase of Chitra while the latter related with his beneficence manifests in a significant way under Libra. This makes the first half of Chitra strenuous, full of conflict and struggling to extricate oneself from one's materialistic encumbrances. When the asterism begins to operate under Libra, it provides relief to the struggling egos. At this stage the inertial impetus of karmic accumulations leads the individual to a Situation where sensual pleasures and animal passion become pronounced. But the psychological lessons learnt earlier which had made the individual recognize the validity of impersonal universal Truth and futility of sensuous gratifications make him half-hearted in the enjoyment of physical pleasures. The heightened sensitivity, expanded consciousness along with attractions for conveniences (though weakened to some extent) create some contradictions and dissatisfaction. There is a distinct trait of pursuing pleasure but there is no contentment even on its fulfillment during the latter half of Chitra. At

deeper levels of his being, the individual is aware of the futility of physical attachments yet there is absence of sufficient will-power to effectively transcend the impact of such temptations. Even the physical pleasures and sensations of various terrestrial relationships remind the individual of the distant goal of everlasting delight which ought to be pursued rather than the ephemeral goals. The individual recognizes his weaknesses in not fulfilling the suggestions of his inner being and as such he acknowledges to his own self his lack of sufficient seer-will. Those who have acquired sufficient will-power to obey the suggestions of their inner voice, they become saints and occultists who lead a balanced life as indicated under Libra and radiate peace, tranquility and fortitude in life relationships. Such a realization is the ultimate possibility under the second half of Chitra.

SWATI

(186° 40' - 200° 00')

Swati intensifies self-centredness: the feeling that the world exists for the self is greatly heightened at this stage. The pleasure principle in the individual is greatly vivified. He is guided in his actions and relationships by personal considerations of likes and dislikes, attractions and repulsions, conveniences and aspirations. These behavioural characteristics are however, not as important as the fact that they arise from the deep-rooted nucleus of I-ness from which every feeling, thought and the motivation of the individual originates. His every action is purposive: the maximisation of personal gain, particularly at the psychomental level, is the guiding objective of the individual. All calculations of gain are made from the Standpoint of materiality; the quantum of power, prestige, wealth, sensuous gratification that the individual could derive from any Situation decides its preferability. For such reasons Swati is described as downward-faced—*Adhomukhi*—but it is invincible. The ego under its sway is unconcerned about the harm it might precipitate to others during the course of its pursuit of pleasure and self-gratification. There is no limit to its exploits yet its inner spirit is not dead though it may not be very powerful. It sends sometimes faint intonations of eternal values and its ultimate goal. Even the karmic forces sometimes produce disturbing situations to make the voice louder. It even upsets the life of the individual. Such situations arise when the karmic nemesis is reached and the ego is readied to take a new plunge. All these turbulences occur when the ego is fit enough to enter the realm of Visakha.

Swati lies wholly within Libra and leads the earlier inertial stream of sensual gratifications to their logical conclusion. Rahu, the rising Node of the Moon, rules over the asterism and Vayu, one of the three primeval deities of the Vedas, presides over it. Rahu and Vayu, both, are very mystical powers in nature. They precipitate their results in a very unexpected manner. They take the individual uniqueness of the egos into consideration and arrange their impulsions in such a way that this exceptional feature of every ego is taken as the fulcrum around which all their results revolve.

Rahu is deeply connected with the fructification of karmic impulses. It produces karmic nemesis. It makes the individual experience consequences of his own actions. The ingress in materiality and neglect of one's divine nature inevitably produce limitations against which the individual may chafe, fret and fume but willy-nilly he will have to undergo the hardships thus produced. When Rahu takes sway over Swati a Situation similar to what happened under its ownership of Ardra under Rajasic attribute is repeated with regard to the production of turbulence. At Ardra, it disturbed the immaterialising trend and aroused deeper wisdom and spirituality, which arises even during its ownership of Swati. The urge for sensuous gratifications and continuance of self-centred activities receive disturbing impact. From these painful experiences arises an understanding though very indistinct at the beginning yet gradually it imparts a new twist in the life of the individual. Rahu is cruel, invincible and makes the heart and egotism crumble. Out of this remorseless ruinous smash, Rahu arouses enough fortitude which helps the individual to retrieve the nectar of divine wisdom lying inside oneself. Rahu does not make the life comfortable; it destroys the fruits of self-seeking activities, either of the present life or of the past, it makes the individual defenceless and induces him to look heavenward for mercy and strength. The full course of Rahu's impact is spread often over several lives during which period the strife and struggle continue. Despite mundane conveniences, sensuous gratifications and social esteem, Swati does not bestow inner contentment. Such is the effect of Rahu. The illumination and understanding awaiting the individual at the conclusion of Swati is well described by the presiding deity Vayu, the god of the wind. Vayu is one of the Vedic triumvirats with Sun and Agni as the other two who energised and guided the manifestation. Vayu is the Lord of Life who pervades all over the universe; it is coexistent with life itself. Agni, Vayu and Sun represent three

mystic degrees of Fire, but the special function of Vayu is to impart this energy in the form of vitality, which enabled the individual to push through and move forward. This motive power for onward propulsion enables the individual to survive the invincible smashing blows of Rahu and to move forward. The Vital Airs generated by Vayu have specialised functions at different levels of existence.

They agitate the total Personality so that the effect of Swati is spread at various levels of the physical being; Vayu oversees that the realization at this stage is complete and total. Only with such a widespread and extensive coverage of its influence could Swati affect total orientation in the life of the individual. Hanumana, the monkey disciple of Lord Rama, epitomised total devotion, limitless power and strength and pinnacle of divine wisdom; he was an offspring of Vayu. The regency of Vayu over Swati aims at producing unflinching faith and confidence in oneself provided outer conditions reminded the individual of his latent faculties.

The Vedas mention Vayu and Indra riding the same chariot [Indra along with Agni presides on the following asterism, Visakha, of which the latter (Indra) is the charioteer. The chariot has a framework of gold; it touches the sky and is drawn by a thousand horses. Sometimes the number of these horses is stated to be a hundred. Indra is a personification of the luminous mind while Vayu generates Vital Airs, Prana, which is the very life-force permeating the entire universe. Without the presence of the luminous mind, the intelligence which intuitively grasps the ultimate reality, the Truth, the life-force energizing the physical being cannot meaningfully proceed much further. The well-directed journey taking place in the chariot of gold refers to the natural orderliness underlying all forms of creation which can take the being from chaos and confusion to harmony and beatitude with the support of solar radiance represented by Indra. Under Swati the animal passion (Vital energy, Vayu) is guided by illumined mind (Indra). The vital energy released under Swati and guided by the luminosity of divine intelligence which reveals the powers latent in man and the hidden laws of Nature, smoothen the evolutionary path and guides the individual on the path of his inner unfoldment.

The difficulties at this stage arise due to the depth of materiality, the thickening of the various sheaths over the inner spirit, while the seat of consciousness is located on the outer surface of these sheaths. In order to direct the consciousness towards the inner spirit, Vayu provides energy (vital airs) and Indra the divine intelligence or the luminous mind while Rahu exposes the karmic impediments to be surmounted. In the process, the sheaths or the veils over consciousness begin to dissolve. The denial of pleasure principle is inevitably a painful process but the last flame of these sensations at this stage heightens the attraction of sensuous gratifications. This contradictory State of the being makes the individual confused and he becomes a bundle of contradiction under Swati.

The golden chariot in which Vayu and Indra move represented the mundane experiences born out of earlier Tamasic proclivities, which under the impact of Swati are transformed into Truth-consciousness pushing the individual and guiding his energies towards the ultimate goal of self-realization. Gold is a mineral taken from inside the earth and is purified by fire to make it suitable for religious and sacrificial rite, Yajna. The gold in man symbolized the highest in him, the divine spark latent in the cavity of his heart, the wisdom of self-realization. The material experiences purified by austerities and strifes and struggles provide the base for the transporting agency whereby the ego succeeds in offering itself for unification with impersonal universal life. Under Swati the ego is taken out of its materiality, is purified under Rahu and is offered to the Inner Spirit in sacrifice for self-realization or union with it. The chariot in which Vayu moves touches the sky: the Swati impulse enables the individual to experience the supreme celestial delight after the transformation of his sensuous gratification into the urge for impersonal self (god)-realization: Swati often bestows flashes of immortal delight which gradually prepares the individual for persevering search for it and to merge with it.

The experiences of delight aroused under Swati cannot be categorised in any specific mould. The chariot of Vayu is drawn by a thousand, or a hundred horses. Each individual gathers his own unique understanding of the Truth and the Path depending upon the karmic forces generated by him and the ultimate destiny that he or she has to accomplish. Everyone on the path of self-realization follows his own unique course. The septenary principle implanted into the egoic consciousness begins to work out its details under Vayu, which is said to be of $(7 \times 7) = 49$ kinds. Each of the seven rays or the seven streams of egoic evolution through which the egos gain their mundane experiences and later enter into their own specific stream after having gathered necessary lessons learnt of other rays before getting assimilated in their Original Spark add further differentiation in the nature of experience gathered under

Swati. It is under Vayu's superintendence that such differentiation is made possible in an effective manner. After Swati, the consciousness in man begins to be specialised according to the uniqueness of his soul.

With such a mind-set the ego enters the next phase of self-realization. This phase is represented by Visakha which still operates under Libra but its last quarter extends into Scorpio. At the terminal point of Swati, the ego remains still within the Venusian impulse but the thick veil of subconsciousness has begun to dissipate. The disenchantment with material attachments under Rahu takes a greater sway over the consciousness. Now the ego needs greater clarity of the ultimate mission, much powerful motive force to proceed further with perseverance and greater protection from the attacks of Mara, the darker forces on the occult path. Visakha (200° 00' - 213° 20') has a much variegated life-experience which leads to vastness of consciousness. Three quarters of the asterism lie in Libra while its last quarter ushers the ego into Scorpio. Visakha as a whole is ruled by Jupiter but its first three quarters are under the sway of Mars, Venus and Mercury while Moons rules over the portion extending into Scorpio, which is under the planetary rulership of Mars. When the ego enters the last quarter of Visakha, the nature of the ego is markedly altered: the pleasure principle has given place to hard struggle in order to retrieve one's pristine nature and develop one's hidden powers so as to transform the subconscious into superconscious and move towards one's mission with clarity of vision and understanding.

VISAKHA

(200°00'-213°20')

Visakha destroys materiality of the ego before it ventures to undertake arduous penance for spiritualizing itself. Under this asterism the duality in man which had aroused animal passion and self-seeking intellect isolating itself from the universal as well as from its group consciousness begins to dissolve. Such a segregation was however, needed to gain diverse experiences and understand the nature and functions of different principles in life operating and expressing themselves through various sheaths. When the consciousness is withdrawn from them and the feeling of I-am-ness begins to melt away, it gives much pain and disenchantment with life. Only after egotism (Ahankara), delusion (Avidya) and pride of the self (Dehabhimana) are dissolved that the primeval nature of man and his pristine innocence can be regained. This painful process is accentuated under Visakha in order to arouse seer-will, the strong determination to ascend to the final seat of glory and to merge the subconscious in conscience and to raise it to the lofty height of Superconscious. The various stellar impulses associated with this asterism describe in detail the steps in this transformation and the level of progress achieved.

Visakha lies in Libra but with one quarter extending into Scorpio. The spread of its influence over the two most mysterious signs of the Zodiac with contradictory radiations under Venus and Mars reveals the storms and turbulence through which the ego passes under this phase of its pilgrimage. The Venusian ease-loving and socialising conditions of life differ markedly from the Martian austerities, devotion and idealism. Towards the end of the asterism, the last quarter of it is swayed by Moon with the asterism as a whole ruled by Jupiter. Under such influences, the ego is steadied in righteousness despite the various trials and tribulations, conflicts and turbulences through which it had to pass under Visakha.

Visakha operates under Libra and Scorpio ruled by Venus and Mars respectively; the asterism as a whole operates under Jupiter. Its four quarters are under the sway of Mars, Venus, Mercury, and Moon. Indra and Agni jointly preside over Visakha which is unique as this is the only asterism under Joint presidentship of two Vedic deities. The primary motivation of the asterism is Dharma, righteousness and is symbolized by a potter's wheel. Other Symbols for the asterism are a portal or the archway through which an individual, specially royal dignitaries cross from one important territory to another. All of these associations with this mysterious asterism reveal some of the abstruse functions of this stellar radiation, but all of them indicate contrariety as well as intense dynamism.

Under Swati, the voice of the inner spirit was almost drowned in the stormy animal passion and self-seeking activities. But the tremendous energy aroused by Vayu which accentuated the uniqueness of the individual and began to illumine the special ray on which he could ultimately attain his goal, did

not stifle his inner voice. The superconscient struggled at this stage to descend to the conscious level which could however, fructify only under Visakha.

The astro-mental turbulence produced by the Joint regency of Indra and Agni agitated the personality so much so that its stability and harmony were disturbed. Jupiter's rulership over the asterism provided the ethical aspiration towards righteousness and the desire to be socially accepted. These urges kept the ego steady towards its goal despite much agitation and instability at the surface. The most enduring impact at this stage is produced by the Vedic deities who shake and agitate the Tamasic proclivities and make the person psychologically unhappy and forsaken. These deities also instill in the individual the fire to pursue. Indra represented the illumined mind; he fished to the individual the insight into the Truth. Indra is also a fighter who wages war against Pani and Vala, the Darker Forces of obscurantism, he does so for retrieving the Truth hidden by them in secret caves. Indra fights the battles almost with very few supporters and so does the ego at this stage. In spite of many uncertainties and very few helpers and support, the ego pursues its goal of self-realization only with the light of some vague prescience of its destiny awaiting for it. Indra leads the individual to dive deep in one's psyche, induces him to be introspective and goads him to advance in order to search and resurrect the central motivating spirit hidden in the cavity of his heart. Visakha impulse in this way produces a very complex psychological mix-up.

The psychological imbroglio is further intensified by the very nature of Indra. He is certainly related with illumined mind and for recovering Truth he fought with Pani and Vala and retrieved it concealed by them, he killed Vritra and Ahi, the serpents which deluded the seekers and he also partook of the Soma drink, the divine nectar. The other aspect of this Vedic deity relates him with intense indulgence in sensual pleasure, smitten by jealousy and suspicion, insecure of his celestial Status and ever engaged in militancy and deceptive intrigues. He commands a large number of celestial singers, musicians and nymphs who often beguiled and seduced the holymen engaged in austere penance lest Indra's throne was usurped by them. His wife Indrani was voluptuous whom he had seduced before marriage. Such contradictory features of Indra pointed to the possibility of Visakha individuals not completely adhering to the tenets of righteousness; they may display lack of sexual morality despite their much concern with higher values in life. This ambivalence is much augmented by Indra's partnership with Agni in presiding over the function of Visakha.

Agni supports and strengthens Indra. Agni is in essence the Truth consciousness, a seer, a priest and a worker whose mission is "to purify all that he works upon and to raise the soul struggling in Nature from obscurity to Light". Agni is certain to attain its objective. Agni is the basic Supreme Will, the Divine Will Force, which assumes different forms at different levels to accomplish its goal. The Rig Veda placed Agni higher to all gods of later manifestation. Blavatsky stated that "air is fluidic fire, water is liquid fire, earth solid fire—Ignis, in its ultimate condition". Sri Aurobindo pointed to another aspect of Agni when he stated that the very word Agni meant "strength and force, beauty and splendour, leading and pre-eminence; it developed also certain emotional values which have perished in Sanskrit, but remain in Greek, angry passion on one side, and on the other delight and love"¹. The marked similarity between Indra and Agni may be deciphered from the allegorical allusion to Indra as a warrior as well as an unbridled seducer and distractor of holymen from their austere penances; Agni also is the purifier to help attainment of the Truth Consciousness as well as an angry person with abundant energy for delight and love. These two opposing attributes of Indra-Agni impulse energising Visakha are in fact two sides of the primordial manifestative power namely the Illumined Mind and the Illumined Will. Agni is described

(1) *The Secret of the Veda*, op cit., p. 358

as the purifier who when devours and enjoys then also he purifies. Indra represented the luminous intelligence into which we have to convert our obscure material mentality in order to become capable of the divine consciousness. The process of Converting one's material experiences and terrestrial attractions into divine consciousness requires much sacrifice, austerities and painful suffering. What the ancient seers represent by *yajna*, the sacrifice, is this purificatory process of which Agni is the chief priest. Agni is the priest whom man puts in front as his spiritual representative. Purohita, a will, a force generator, higher, more infallible than his own, doing for him the work of the sacrifice, purifying the material of the oblation, offering them to the gods whom it has summoned to the divine ritual, determining the right order and seasons of its work, conducting the progress, the march of the sacrificial development. These and various other functions of the symbolic priesthood, represented in the outward sacrifice by different officiating priests, are discharged by the single Agni"¹. The unity

between Indra and Agni at Visakha represents the unity between the illumined mind arousing the illumined will so as to burn all the karmic dross born of delusion and egotism in order to attain divine consciousness, The clarity of the goal and the power to pursue it.

Libra ruled by Venus operates under the general background of love, animal passion, desire to unite and experience finer sensual pleasures and attainment of pleasurable gifts of Nature. Such impulses were available even under Swati under the superintendence of Vayu. Under the dual regency of Indra and Agni, the stream of consciousness was differentiated between animal passion, material pleasures, and accentuation of Tamasic proclivities on the one side and disenchantment from materiality, aspiration towards enlightenment, follow-up of the intuitive flashes and divine intonations; under the Joint regency of Indra and Agni, the two differentiated streams of consciousness were merged together which produced much heat but from it arose a new understanding and a new determination to purify and to spiritualise oneself. The Strange association of sensual gratifications, animal passion and love with illumined mind and illumined will is often misunderstood. But the latter is the efflorescence of the former. HP. Blavatsky explained it by stating that Kama (sexual passion) in

(1) *The Secret of the Veda*, op. cit., p.359

the Rig Veda was the personification of that feeling which leads and propels to creation. Kamadeva (the Indian Cupid) was the First Movement that stirred the one after its manifestation from the purely Abstract Principle to create. The Atharva Veda identified Kamadeva with Agni. Thus Agni does not only lead to Tapas, penance, but it also arouses animal passions, desire and thirst for sensual gratifications. At Visakha stage of egoic unfoldment when the individual has specially under Swati realised the futility of his terrestrial accomplishments, he is prepared to sacrifice in the flames his animal passions and thirst for sensuous experiences so as to seek Agni's assistance in order to attain Truth-Consciousness. Such a Situation makes the psycho mental frame at Visakha turbulent but with a ray of hope and determination to accomplish one's destiny despite immense pain and sorrow likely to be present in the process.

Visakha is symbolized by a potter's wheel; another symbol for it is a portal or an archway through which the royal dignitary crosses while travelling from one important territory to another. These Symbols refer to the same process of transformation. At Visakha, the centre of consciousness shifts from physical to the spiritual, from animal passion to divine union, from sense gratification to merging into the universal consciousness. The I-ness of the individual which characterises the Tamasic journey so far is transformed into the consciousness of the Supreme Self. This shift in the centre of consciousness introduces a new way of looking at the world, a new understanding of one's purpose in life and one's responsibilities. This reflects the union between the clay representing the physical self, matter, and the potter representing the Divine Self, the Creator, and the surrender of the clay, the individual, to be moulded by the potter according to the image for it in His mind. This is the transformation that marked the Visakha stage of egoic development.

An important feature to note at Visakha with regard to the transformation of the astro-mental make-up of the individual is the differentiation and Separation of the egos according to the septenary principle of manifestation. During the early phases of Rajasic impulsion, the septenary principle was repeatedly imprinted on the evolving entity. During the Tamasic impulsion the immersion in matter was so thick that every one needed his extrication from it effectively and at the earliest so as to commence his path of withdrawal and return. The realization that the inner spirit must be retrieved and the matter must be silenced has now once more revived the importance of the septenary principle in manifestation because the retracing of the flow will also have to be made on the same stream of development. The seven flames of Agni remind one of this relationship. Agni is also hymned as the child of seven Mothers—for his complete birth is a result of the manifestation of the seven principles which constitute our consciousness—three spiritual of the Infinite, the three of the finite, and one intermediate—and which are respectively the foundation of the seven worlds¹. The special importance of this principle arises because the territory in which Visakha ushers the ego requires well differentiated Channels of evolution so as to unveil the individual uniqueness effectively. Now onward, the egoic development becomes very specialised. Visakha enters into Scorpio with its last quarters ruled by Moon which effectively prepared the egos for their flow in the differentiated stream of consciousness.

(1) *The Secret of the Veda*, op. cil., p. 362

SCORPIO (Vrischikam)

(200° 00'-240° 00")

Scorpio is mystically described as "the worm that never dies". The Samoan sage Pythagoras represented it as the House of Death. H.P. Blavatsky related it with Patala or the pit considered in occult literature as the place for imparting highly secret Initiations in Mystic Schools. But Patala according to her was "impregnated with the brightness of the new Sun" represented by the "newly born" into the glory. Scorpio was even identified with "a pit, a grave, the place of death and the door of Hades or Shoal". T. Subba Row thought that the sign represented Vishnu, the preservative principle of the Hindu pantheism. Vishnu literally meant that which is expanded as the universe. Subba Row intimated that Vishnu represented the Swapnavastha or the Dreamy State. Scorpio according to him signified the universe in thought or the universe in the divine conception. He further explained this sign as the inevitable and necessary chain in the transformation of the individualization ego into the all pervasive universal consciousness¹.

In the process of self-realization it is necessary that the objective coverings of the inner spirit are completely dissociated from the subjective entity ensouling them. The inversion of the outgoing consciousness towards the inner core of the being and denuding it of all materiality is not only painful but also a mystical process. Various deceptions emerging at different levels have to be surmounted. All such practices for acquiring the divine wisdom have only been allegorically described. On successful emergence from many difficult tests to ascertain complete objectivity of the soul could an individual hope to progress further towards enduring Light and Life. Such tests are made and the candidates are put to rigorous scrutiny before the opening of the inner eyes and release of the latent Secret Fire. The Serpent Nagas, the great Initiators are said to reside at the pit represented by Scorpio. The sign is "a cavity, a hiding place, a hole" in which resides Vasuki, the Serpent Naga used in the churning of the Ocean. This stupendous drama of cosmic and human evolution could be enacted only after the incubation of the Serpent Fire hidden in the cavity of the

(1) *Collection of Esoteric Writings*, op. cit., p.9

earth or of the heart is activated. Scorpio represents the realm of this metaphysical process of the retrieval of the individual's hidden energies and of harnessing them for the acquisition of spiritual merits.

The Serpent Nagas are the great Initiators into Divine Mysteries and they prepare the aspirants after the Truth very meticulously. They take special care to examine every hidden aspect of the person and try to expose every weakness whether physical, psychological or moral before leading him to the portal of Divine Wisdom. Such opportunities are given to only those aspirants who have overcome their personal predilections and involuntary urges for self-seeking sensuous gratifications and are prepared to work for the sake of universal good. Such special rituals and training take place either at secret places like caves, deep forests, high mountains or barren land; they are also in some special cases performed on the subjective plane when the candidates are presented astrally (while their physical bodies are at rest). It is in the last initiation that Subba Row's indication of Scorpio's relationship with the dream state holds good. These Initiations and the arousal of secret Life Energy in man prepare the egos for their future spiritualization and inner unfoldment. The sign represents the turning point from the reign of involuntary immaterialisation to extricating oneself from the veil of delusion and materiality and thus becoming outward turned trying to put one's all efforts and energies for the good of the humanity. The sign represents the awakening of the Buddhist consciousness.

Mention has been made earlier of the Greek seers who exposed the secret of the triple union of Virgo-Libra-Scorpio and made them three distinct signs. The geometrical Symbols of Virgo and Scorpio point out to their similarity as well as the subtle difference present between them. The Symbol of Virgo is weighed down towards its end with a cross which emphasized earthy nature of the sign, whereas Scorpio is ended with an arrow. Arrow represents spiritual aspiration. Once the materiality of the ego is churned (which certainly results in much sorrow, frustration and disenchantment with life), innate divine qualities begin to sprout and the person unveil one's spiritual powers, he would now pour out his energy for the universal evolutionary growth and aligns himself on the side of divine powers working for the occult hierarchy. Scorpio provides this impetus to work for spiritual powers.

Scorpio is a sign that is related with hidden aspects of oneself. It is primarily related with one's subjective experiences. Ketu is said to be exalted in this sign; Moon is in debilitation. Both these planets are related with subjective aspects of the being. Moon reflects the solar radiance and enables the individual to get an insight into Atmic power while Ketu churns the various experiences of one's

earthly existence, and derives the quintessence of wisdom from them. Moon's debilitation precludes the ego from receiving the superconscious and merging it with its conscience. The impact of lunar creativity on the physical plane is greatly restricted but there is much agitation at the mental level. Ketu's exaltation in this sign leading to intense mentation enables the individual to receive so much experience-born intelligence that he begins to get intuitive flashes of his mission in life and guidance for overcoming the various ordeals on the path. The intense thought process aroused under Ketu and spiritual illumination received under its impetus expose the ego to universal evolutionary mainstream. The ego begins to get intonations of its future possibilities. Scorpio is not so much active on the physical plane as concerned with consciousness aspect of life. It helps psychological preparedness of the person. As consciousness is an aspect of the eternal flow of life essence in the ego ever present whether in life or during the period of interregnum between two births, Scorpio's concern with consciousness more than the physical welfare of the individual made it 'the worm that never dies'.

Scorpio makes the ego highly sensitive as well as powerful; It makes the individual happy and stable only during the period of useful activities. The planetary ownership of the sign assigned to Mars, and Kamadeva, the Indian Cupid, as its presiding deity makes the ego extremely creative and full of life. In the Rig Veda Kamadeva was given much prominence for desire was said to be have been the first movement that arose in the One after it had come into life. Under the influence" of Kamadeva, Scorpio propels the ego towards movement but its disenchanting experiences under deep mentation caused by Ketu, make the ego not to wish to involve itself any longer in terrestrial activities. This psychological frame of the mind makes it look homeward and prepare for the Return of the Journey. Taurus represented the creative potential and readied the ego to immerse in matter and take up the task of generation, but Scorpio on the other end of it prepared the ego for its spiritual unflodment and the path of withdrawal. Mars bestowed the power of self-surrender, devotion and courageous endurance of the ordeals likely to be present on the path. Scorpio under Mars and Kamadeva prepared the ego for its spiritualisation process and instilled in it deep aspiration for its union with the Original Soul. In order to make this desire into conviction and transform experiences into seer-will, Scorpio begins by drowning the ego into deepest darkness of material pit, and gradually leads it to acquire greater Siddhis, accomplishments and move homeward. Scorpio has a distinct message for the ego: it imparts a vision of primeval source of manifestation and the possibility of returning to it. The individual in his inner nature accepts the Truth but the courage to pursue the inner voice and to persevere in one's mission depends upon the quality of its various sheaths reflecting its karmic accumulations. The future growth and unfoldment of the egoic consciousness depends upon the determination of the individual. The three asterisms that constitute the sign show the gradual transformation possible for him.

VISAKHA (Contd.)

(200°00'-213°20')

The last quarter of Visakha extends into Scorpio. Moon rules over this portion; its overall planetary ruler is Jupiter and its presiding deity, as indicated earlier, is Indra-Agni. The combined effect of Moon and Jupiter on this portion of Visakha is not very encouraging. The primary function of Moon is to reflect the solar rays, carry the superconscious to the level of conscient and impart the light of Divine Wisdom. The debilitation of Moon in Scorpio seriously impairs its power to be creative and effective. The message therefore received by Moon does not fructify. This limitation is further strengthened due to antipathic relationship between Jupiter and Moon specially with regard to revelation of deeper (esoteric) truths of life. Visakha in Scorpio intensifies the voice of conscience, vivifies the inner light, but the Jovian influence keeps the ego under the inertial Tamasic hold, it is not able to extricate itself from its materialistic bondage. The desire to prosper in the physical world and to enjoy the pleasures of senses is still very strong. The special influence of Scorpio begins to manifest only when the ego enters the realm of Anuradha.

ANURADHA

(213°20'-226°40')

Anuradha and Jyestha have strong affinity with Scorpio This relationships is well expressed by the symbols assigned to them. The eighth sign of the zodiac is symbolized by a scorpion which is remarkable for its self-centred affection with painful poisonous infliction. Students of yogic practices associate Scorpio with spinal cord within which lie the dormant Serpent Fire coiled like a serpent. It contams within itself the highly vibrant energy essential for integrating the seven principles in man; it

is only with the support of Serpent Fire that one could hope to unify the individual consciousness with the universal life-essence. Those who succeed in activating this power and control it, they attain such powers as to control the creative manifestative process. But, it is a very dangerous energy-source; if it is not tackled with utmost purity of heart and altruism, it could be explosive and could even destroy its devotee. Such are the possibilities under Scorpio. Anuradha intervenes at this stage so that the egoic unfoldment is regulated with utmost safeguard without minimising its might. A lotus flower as a symbol of this asterism represents all the positive attributes of the Power of Life, the Kundalini Shakti, but regulates its impact in such a manner that the development does not produce its destructive side. A lotus flower represents the perfection in manifestation, but an ear-ring and an umbrella are symbols which patently refer to the coiled energy at the base of the spinal cord. The urge for spiritualization aroused under Visakha which impels the Scorpio impetus to take the ego towards its celestial repose could only be supported by the Anuradha impulse which laid open the possibility of activating and harnessing the highly secret occult energy. But the Anuradha impulse takes great care to see that the moral fabric of the devotee is sufficiently strengthened.

The necessary preparations for holding within oneself the mighty serpent fire are made through the assistance of Saturn which enjoys the unique privilege of guiding such aspirants. Anuradha is ruled by Saturn. Mitra presides over Anuradha. Its four quarters are guided by Sun, Mercury, Venus and Mars. The indwelling nectar or the mighty power lying within the soul is vigorously churned by these planets.

They greatly agitate the astro-mental nature of the individual. There is a whirlwind of impulses generated under Anuradha. In this context the symbol of a lotus flower for the asterism may apparently seem enigmatic: but this symbol represents the final outcome of the tossing that takes place under the asterism, which produces waves of surging emotions, uncontrolled sensual attractions and an intense feeling for indulging in all kinds of depravities but once the storm is over and astro-mental quietude is achieved, it leads the individuals to sublime aspirations, visions of beatitude and attraction towards universal harmony. Much of this is produced by Saturn: Saturn generates powers of vastness, intensity, endurance and infinitude. It provides much material prosperity in many cases but it is with a purpose. It is done so with a view to taking away the same and making the individual forlorn and completely disenchanted with everything personal. Saturn fosters impersonal outlook. It leads to the experiencing of Void, the Eternal Night, the source from which emerges the Light and Power of Immortality. Saturn represents withdrawal of the manifestative process; it reduces the various differentiating elements into their primeval essence and in the process it enkindles the light of the divine beatitude, along with immense suffering and deprivation. No one can escape the impact of Saturn; It is invincible. The impact of Anuradha under the impact of Saturn also likewise becomes enduring and spiritualizing.

At Anuradha, Saturn precipitates hell to the individual. It destroys his egotism; the churning Operation at this stage is so furious that it washes away all traces of I-am-ness in the tears of his heart. When the encumbrances of the past, even the fossilized knowledge of the scriptures, are completely eliminated, Saturn presents the soul to the presence of its Holy Master. The first quarter of the asterism under the rulership of Sun destroys personal relationships, emotional stability and social Status so much so that no germ of earthly life can multiply under its spiritual heat; it radiates that blinding light under which all forms vanish. Mercury the divine messenger then takes the evolving soul towards its primeval source and transforms all earthly experiences into Pure Awareness. In relation with Anuradha, Venus ruling over its third quarter is not concerned with sensual gratifications, rather through all sensations it aims at giving to the ego a glimpse of that delight and happiness from which is born impersonal love. The final transformation under Anuradha takes place under Mars, the fiery planet which begins by exposing the bondage created by earthly acquisitive proclivities, gives an insight in their transitoriness and then dissolves them in their spiritual content. The spilling of blood, deep anguish and bitter frustrations experienced under Scorpio result from the Martian impact. As Mars is Vargottam at this stage, all the devastations caused by it are meant to bestow on the ego the power of perseverance to follow the Inner Light, the voice of one's conscience. The four planets related with different quarters of Anuradha aim at producing those impulses which harmonize with the overall results aimed at by Saturn which is to transform the karmic accumulations into impersonal creative universal energy.

Anuradha functions under the Vedic deity Mitra. He is one of the guardians of Light who leads the pilgrims to Immortality, Delight and Truth. Mitra and Varuna are generally invoked together in the Vedas. Together with Varuna, Mitra upholds and rules the earth and sky, guards the world, encourages religion and chastises sin. What Varuna conceals during the night, Mitra reveals during the day, "but the secrets of Mitra are not to be revealed to the foolish". When Mitra takes the charge of Anuradha, it

imparts highly esoteric wisdom which is divulged only to the specially prepared souls: Such revelations are made at the subjective level and in strict secrecy so much so that it cannot be expressed by any spoken word or through any sign. The teachings given by Mitra are at the inner plane but its glow radiates through the outer sheaths making them transparent. In a determined manner, Mitra loosens the shackles of materialistic ignorance, egotism and delusion of the physical form, which are the first and the last vestiges of Tamasic impulsions. Only with the elimination of these impediments the ego could hope and aspire to arouse its inner energy and succeed in controlling its involuntary instincts. Anuradha being the penultimate asterism within Tamasic evolutionary forces has a very onerous task to eliminate the materialistic propensities and to enthuse the ego to proceed forward which it does by flashing the vision of the ultimate goal, revealing the secrets of Nature and instilling sufficient courage, hope and inspiration. Anuradha prepares the ego for the fierce struggle it has to meet in its efforts to retrieve its pristine nature. Scorpio has been preparing the ego for this task.

At Visakha, Indra sharpened the intellect, gave insight into the intimations of Truth and inspired it to fight for it. Agni provided the Divine Light and Power which strengthened the seer-will, Sankalpa or the strong determination, to accomplish the goal revealed by its intellect. When Mitra took charge of such a mind-frame at Anuradha seeking Truth, the ultimate illumination, he imparted purified strength, purified discernment. Mitra destroys the foes of the solar illumination who obstruct the dissemination of piercing rays of the Divine Wisdom concealed under the veil of Darkness, Night. Varuna worked to protect the Divine Wisdom from the unwary and immersed it in Mayavic illusion, thereby denying the seekers access to the Truth and Light, Mitra aroused Love, Joy and Harmony. He laid the necessary foundation for the unveiled spiritual perception. Mitra's task is to prepare the seekers for such enlightenment, which destroyed the veil of illusion while assuring protection from the misuse of the knowledge thus gained. Mitra does not only accentuate the quality of the mind, it also provides discernment so that the seekers could rightly employ the power entrusted to them. Before such supernal power and wisdom are unfolded to the individual, his preparedness has to be tested and the power of discernment scrutinised. For this purpose, Mitra works with Saturn which destroys all impulsiveness and vanity of the self. Self-centeredness of the little ego which is to be destroyed by Saturn does not harmonize with pure discernment and luminous intellect which is bestowed by Mitra. The painful experiences arise from the breaking up of the material sheaths which concealed the inner spirit and frustrated the self-centeredness of the individual. They are important features of Scorpio which inevitably leads to the harmonizing process started by Mitra. The realization that the laws of love and delight which underlie all divine manifestation ultimately guides the ego to Truth, Light and Immortality. The individual also acquired several other qualities. Which Mitra is engaged in providing them. He directs the arousal of Will (an extension of the impulse generated by Agni under Visakha) which is in harmony with Truth and he also strengthens fortitude which is reinforced by purified discernment. The Will as it enters more and more into the wideness of the Truth-Consciousness becomes itself wide and vast, and free from limitations. Mitra gives a direction to the seer-will aroused earlier; undaunted by any worldly considerations, the seeker is now prepared to meet the karmic nemesis whatever remained so far and thereby annihilate the remaining foes of Light. The frustrating experiences under Scorpio are a prelude to the universal delight. Anuradha is that spiritualizing impetus which stirs the Sediments of past karmic accumulations in such a way that it produces turmoil, frustration and sorrows so as to enable the ego to have a vision of universal love, Joy and Harmony which it could possess permanently if it could overcome the ordeals on the Path.

The very name Anuradha, as explained by Sri Aurobindo, comes from a Sanskrit root-word which means both 'to embrace' and 'to contain and hold' and again 'to build or form' in the sense of linking together the parts or materials of whole. The word Anuradha reveals the dual nature of the asterism. It refers to prosperity, delight and beatitude as well as the follow up results of propitiations. 'Radha' is delight, accomplishment but it also means dark-coloured, obscure and black; 'Anu' implies 'a part of it', 'in consequence of', 'linked with' and 'moving toward'. The asterism impels the evolving ego towards an accomplishment of its destined goal but in the process it produced obscurities, aroused dark coloured obscure difficulties and led the individual to sorrows and frustration (which depended upon his karmic past which required extermination before further advancement). Thus what Saturn and Mitra produced in the evolutionary sequence of the soul are well reflected by the very nomenclature of the asterism.

The symbol of lotus flower assigned to the asterism is also full of mythological significance. The lotus is an ancient symbol of perfection, beauty, harmony and self-generating life-giving power. The obvious meaning of the word Padma which means a lotus also stands for an elephant, a kind of temple, and a species of serpents. From Padma, the lotus, was born Lakshmi, the goddess of fortune and the consort

of Lord Vishnu. Lakshmi represented the creative power of the Lord concerned with preservation, nourishment and growth of the universe. The lotus, in addition, represents natural balance, harmony, evolution and obeisance. The serpent has several characteristics which make it a very meaningful occult symbol. The serpent sloughs its Skin (like a crab which symbolized the fourth sign) to maintain its unity of consciousness with the evolving entity, but it also represented wisdom, creative power namely the Kundalini Shakti. The serpent symbol portrayed the harmonizing and the balancing influence of the higher nature of man, which is capable of healing and raising the dead to life which symbolized the transformation of the lower nature in man into his higher nature. It also stood for one's latent powers. Whether we considered a lotus, a serpent or an elephant to represent Anuradha, its wisdom impulse, its immensity of inner potential and mystical nature with power to ascend to the higher levels of Truth-Consciousness seem to be the basic characteristics of the asterism.

At this stage of human evolution, the past karmic factors produced by ignorance of spiritual laws begin to peter out and the understanding of the cosmic laws, universal harmony, and obeisance to the supreme Reality are intensified. The strife to exterminate the results of bygone days of indiscretions leads to difficulties and sorrows but the asterism finally impels the ego to move forward with determination to observe great austerities conforming with Divine Laws so as to cooperate with the universal harmony prevailing throughout the cosmos. With such preparedness the ego makes the final assault on Tamasic tendencies when it enters Jyestha, the asterism which leads to eminence and accomplishments.

JYESTHA

(226°40'-240°00')

Jyestha concludes the Tamasic propensities and prepares the ego to undertake the Sattwic evolution effectively. But before the ego makes its final assault it needs much intelligence and awareness of his own nature, strength and weakness. Jyestha is the asterism which imparts this kind of knowledge and operates like a bridge wherefrom the pilgrim enters into a new terrain of Truth and Harmony. The ego is now content with its life and its evolutionary efforts. It has now the assurance that life lived according to rules of spirituality, righteousness, wisdom and desirelessness must necessarily carry it to its final redemption. It gradually experiences the opening up of its divine nature and greater realization of Truth, Light, Power, and Delight. Its personal consciousness gradually begins to merge in the universal consciousness. But all the egos emerging through this asterism do not necessarily qualify for the inner unfoldment to the same extent: some of them still have to learn their lessons of detachment. At the end of Tamasic impulses the stream of evolving egos is differentiated into two Channels: one stream continues with very slow rate of karmic retribution and mental development, while the next having taken up their involuntary impulses under their control and having developed enough seer-will move at a faster rate. The degree of immersion in materiality and maturity of understanding being lower in the former Channel, they receive much sorrowful experiences during the Sattwic asterisms making their life very mundane and troublesome. But the next group of egos undergoes many occult experiences and receives guidance which accelerates the speed of their unfoldment. Jyestha in practical life produces both categories of individuals.

Jyestha means superior, the eldest sister as well as the middle finger. It is also an epithet for the Ganges. The asterism is ruled by Mercury and is presided over by the Vedic deity Indra alone (unlike Visakha which was presided over by Indra along with Agni). The four quarters of Jyestha are governed by Jupiter and Saturn, the former owning the first and the fourth quarters and Saturn owning the two middle ones. Mercury its overall ruler is messenger between the gods and men; it is also a bridge between the mortals and the immortal beings. Mercury is related with the thinking principle in man while Indra is the lord of mental illumination. The asterism lies completely within Scorpio which is ruled by Mars. These features of the asterism point to its special significance in respect of psycho-mental transformation (Mercury and Indra) produced as a result of voluntary and conscious efforts (Mars) made by the ego. The middle finger is used by the yogis in their Pranayama when they regulate the in-and outflow of their breath before they commence their deep meditation leading to Samadhi. At Jyestha, the Martian impulse even externalized the past karmic accumulations for their dissolution under the direct mentation of the illumined mind. Under Jyestha the individual casts off his material sheaths, abandon his egotistic self-centredness and becomes firm in divine light. This is the primary function of Jyestha.

This stage of egoic development usually occurs when the Serpent Fire, the Kundalini Shakti, is aroused and the individual raises the subconscious to merge it with superconscious; at this level, Kundalini rising from Muladhara, the Spinal Energy-centre, and traversing through various other such energy-centres finally joins Sahasrara, the Crown Energy-centre and illumines the ego with Atmic Light, the Supreme Illumination. At this moment of enlightenment, the individual does not suffer from any illusory obscurities, his vision becomes clear, his goal is recognized and the seer-will has asserted itself. This may be only a moment of illumination but once this unity with the Universal Self is realised, there occurs a radical orientation in the individual; there is no confusion in his mind about the goal of his life. He takes sorrows and frustrations of his everyday life in his evolutionary stride. He is confident that there is an inner spirit dwelling within him which will guide him amidst the welter of mundane existence. It will finally lead him to Immortality, to the Immutable light, and to the Truth where the Divine Delight awaits him. It is for such reasons that Jyestha is assigned the symbol of an ear-ring or of an umbrella both of which stand for the successful arousal of the Serpent Fire located at the base of the spine. This is the stage of the final cessation of the Tamasic impulsion, but it does not represent the final stage of the journey. This is the stage when the various sheaths covering his inner spirit has begun to lose their overpowering hold over his spirit.

The process by which the Atmic Light is recognized is greatly assisted by Jyestha. This asterism is under the Single guardianship of Indra. The Vedas did not assign to Indra as high a Status as to Surya (Sun), Vayu (Air), and to Agni (Fire), yet he was considered very special: he was constantly engaged in retrieving the cows (which symbolized the Light) stolen and concealed by Pani (representing the Darker Forces, or the Spiritual Ignorance) in the caves (hidden side of the physical being) which Indra (Illumined Mind) succeeds to win back. The legend of the recovery of the lost cows from the caves of the Panis by Indra and Brihaspati with assistance from the hounds, Sarama (Insight) and the Angirasa Rishis represents the very heart of Vedic hymns. In Vedic literature, the cows represented the radiance of the illumination of the Divine Dawn: the horses and the chariots symbolized the force and the movement, gold was light, the shining wealth of Divine Sun—the true Light. All the gods were conquerors and givers of the cows, horses, and the divine riches but it was specially Indra who was the hero and the fighter in this warfare. For human beings he represented the Light and the Force. In the Vedas Indra is constantly addressed as the Master of the herds; at times he is even imaged as himself the cow and the horse. He is a good milker whom the Rishis wished to milk and what he yields is perfect form and the ultimate thought. This identification between the cow and Indra is important for the attainment of the final bliss but at Jyestha stage, he is the hero, the conqueror and the destroyer of obstructions. These are his main functions as the presiding deity of Jyestha. In the present context, he achieves his result with the assistance of Mercury, the planetary ruler of the asterism, which is actively engaged in the retrieval of divine light, the cows, and the Seer-Will, the horses. The four quarters of the asterism revealed the storms and Stresses undergone by the ego in attaining this position where the vision of final possibilities flashes to it and it, in spite of varying degrees of preparedness and karmic accumulations, decides to embark on the path of self-illumination, the retrieval of the cows from the caves of Pani and escaping the thralldom of Tamasic proclivities. Jyestha presents the last struggle between light and darkness, wisdom and illusion, freedom and bondage. The four quarters of the asterism are owned by Jupiter and Saturn; Jupiter owns the first and the fourth quarters while Saturn controls the middle ones, namely the second and the third quarters. The enlightenment and the seer-will attained during Visakha and the harmonisation of the soul with cosmic laws (under Anuradha) qualify the aspirants to invoke Brihaspati (Jupiter) and seek his guidance for the fulfilment of the objectives for which he makes sacrifices and offers obeisance. Brihaspati is primarily a priest who helps the sacrificer to reach the desired god and to bring back the divine benedictions to the sacrificer. It alludes to the individual's determination to raise his sub-consciousness to Super-consciousness and to partake of the Soma juice, the divine delight resulting from the obeisance. The role of Jupiter represented by personal austerities, cleansing of the triple principles of mind, life and body, and the descent of the super-conscious in the form of Divine Delight are the characteristic impulses of Jupiter.

These aspects of psychological preparedness arise from the attainment of Truth-Consciousness represented by Jupiter. The awakening to Anand, Pure Delight, by bringing forward in mind of the intuitional soul the idea of being the leader of the conscious activities is the consummation or at least, the condition of the consummation Truth Consciousness or the awakening of the pure delight of the superconscious is the first step towards this consummation, and this awakening comes from Jupiter. The urge towards this consummation (Visakha), conformity with cosmic laws (Anuradha), awakening to the nectar of Immortality, the Supreme Anand, and the urge to sacrifice for them (under Jupiter) aroused the determination, the seer-will, for the final struggle between the forces of Matter and Spirit, the

sensual pleasures and the immortal delight (which occurs under Saturn, the ruler of the middle quarters of Jyestha). The role of Saturn at this stage may seem devastating unless the aspirant had attained adequate power and strength for the task. The ancient seers warned the aspirants against it without acquiring the necessary qualifications. The dissolution of physical attachments, disappearance of form and pleasures associated with it, and the insecurity of the Infinity, the immensity of the Vastness arising before the wine of immortality and the supreme delight is tasted completely disturbs the psycho-mental balance of the individual. Saturn, the ruler of the second and the third quarters of Jyestha, and Mars, the ruler of the sign Scorpio in which the asterism operates, are mutually inimical: the former represents dissolute nature while the latter is fiery enthusiasm, the life-force and the thirst for life. The struggle between these two planets powerfully connected with the culmination of Jyestha while the mind-principle in the ego is highly activated explains the trials and tribulations arising under Scorpio. But once the struggle is over, the storm has ceased, and the feet of the disciple have been washed in the blood of his heart, he is taken over by Jupiter in the fourth quarter of Jyestha when the descent from the Super-conscious established Truth-Consciousness firmly in the mind. The Jupiterian impulse makes stable the turbulent psycho-mental State and establishes in the physical consciousness of the individual a sort of mighty constraint which checked the inertial or the depressive propensities of the subconscient. Jupiter provides the constant source of strength of the Super-conscious to the evolving ego in its sojourn under the Sattwic impulses which it will have to traverse before reaching its final goal.

The forces released under Jupiter and Saturn lead to the linkage between the sub-conscious and the Super-conscious, and to the descent of the supreme delight by this linkage; it is effectively done under the planetary rulership of Mercury, which is primarily a messenger, a link. Mercury is capable of adapting itself to all situations. It has the unique role in establishing close relationship between the physical consciousness of the individual represented by the lower quaternary which constituted his physical body, the vital energy which circulated and energised it, his emotional or the sensuous sensibilities, and the intellectual or the thinking mind, and the higher triad represented by Atma which is a reflection of Sachchidanand representing the triple unity of Sat (Truth), Chit (consciousness) and Anand (Bliss), Buddhi which is the Pure Light, and Manas, the universal consciousness. Mercury operates as a bridge between the lower quaternary and the higher triad which when firmly established enabled smooth functioning of all the seven principles in man and thus led to unimpeded self-awareness. The four quarters of Jyestha try to open out this Channel of communication effectively. The Truth-consciousness thus established destroys Avidya, ignorance. With the negation of Separatist consciousness which accrues as the result of Saturnian impact, egotism or ahamkara also ends; with the union between sub-conscious and the super-conscious, the feeling of physical separateness between the individual and the universe is finished, and with the opening of the Channel between the higher and the lower levels of consciousness, the personal consciousness of the individual is unified with the universal consciousness. These accomplishments are represented by the ear-ring or the umbrella which are emblems of royal Status and power. They signify the end of primary Tamasic impulsion. The individual egos which have crossed this stage of development is ushered in the realm of Sattwic Attributes. The last four signs of the zodiac represent the unfoldment of divine qualities latent in man. When the last phase of the journey is over, the consciousness of the individual begins to vibrate in complete harmony with the universal consciousness; the personalised ego then becomes a part of the Whole. It attains its archetype. The ascent to this height however, passes through very difficult terrain, more difficult than experienced so far. It consists of mystic phases of discipleship under Adept Teachers, training in occult laws of manifestation, trials of the neophyte and finally the ascension to the highest seat of Light and Glory. The last four zodiacs containing in their region the last nine asterisms reveal the most mystic encounters required of the evolving egos before they attain complete Self-Awareness and retrieve their pristine nature.

SATTWIC ATTRIBUTE

Sattwa is primarily of the nature of Light, the quality that leads to enlightenment, self-awareness and self-realization. It removes the veil over orfe's pristine consciousness and innocence. Sattwic Attribute leads to harmonisation with Universal Consciousness. It reveals the Reality, leads to Light and bestows Puissance. But the process through which this goal is reached is arduous. It involves several trials and heart wrenching experiences. The pilgrim on the path suffers* from excruciating pain and sorrow. Such sufferings have to be endured and many deprivations have to be borne before the ultimate mission is accomplished. The several zodiacal signs between Sagittarius and Pisces comprising the nine asterisms from Moolam to Revati gradually prepare the ego for the trial and final release of the imprisoned splendour.

The Inertial Impulse, Tamsie Vritti, at the acme of the materialisation process sows the seeds of disappointment with various terrestrial acquisitions and self-centred activities around the nucleus of egotism. At the same time they also intone the message of the Immensity of one's latent possibilities and the Eternal Bliss lying at the end of the journey. The aspiration to fathom one's inner depth and to attain liberation from material bondage stirs the psycho-spiritual frame of the mind and urges the individual to pass through various births and deaths, trials and tribulations, the long tunnel of darkness and the desolate vale of sorrow, before entering the portal of beatitude and the celestial glory at the end. Even when egotism, illusion and selfcentredness intensified during the inertial phase of evolution are dissolved and the mind is purged of all terrestrial-ignorance born Sediments, life does not cease for the individual. He experiences a new dawn which happens towards the end of Jyestha, but that is merely the beginning of a more satisfying life and relationships. Now, there is every possibility for the individual to meet his Master face to face and receive his marching Orders. Before the occurrence of this highly inspiring experience, the individual has to pass through the most agonising experiences. The occult literature has very emphatically affirmed that "Before the soul can stand in the presence of Holy Masters, its feet must be washed in the blood of its heart". This reveals that the Sattwic unfoldment is not a period of shining glory and unmitigated bliss, rather it comprises immense sorrow, psychological metamorphosis, and radical changes in one's relationships. It is evident from the fact that Sagittarius, Capricorn and Aquarius precipitate much difficulties in the everyday life of the egos passing through them. Sattwic impulsions dissolves the personality of the individual, it blends his consciousness with the Universal Spirit. Metaphorically, he dons the silken robe, becomes a part of the Occult Hierarchy and functions as an active beneficent force of Nature. These changes are introduced imperceptibly, every asterism and every zodiacal sign produces ever increasing degree of sorrow but with every success in the trial the ego acquires greater power and better understanding of the Reality. When the self is completely shorn of its illusion, it experiences a mutation and redemption from narrowness and various earthly bondages.

The various asterisms intervening between Jyestha which represented the highest attainment under the realm of Inertial Impulsion and Revati which marked the assimilation of the ego in the universal creative energy reveal the important stages in this process of Transformation. The psychospiritual changes produced at several stages of Sattwic unfoldment are only cryptically mentioned in occult literature much of which are not realistically comprehended and their expression in one's everyday life is not well recognized. The sorrowful experiences of an individual usually predicted in astrology do not point to the ultimate objectives of these difficulties. Whatever happens under the Sattwic phase of unfoldment is aimed at exposing some new facet of the inner man. The scriptures have stated that "Before the eyes can see they must be incapable of tears" (Moolam). "Before the ear can hear, it must have lost its sensitiveness" (Shravana). "Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Master it must have lost the power to wound" (Dhanistha). "Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Master, its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart" (Prosthpada). These requirements entail complete eschewing of personal hurt, revenge and sense of separateness which are extremely difficult conditions to fulfill. The Vedic seers were aware of the deeper significance of these asterisms; they prayed to them and invoked their benediction for the accomplishment of their Samadhi, supreme meditation which linked them with the Supreme. The Sattwic asterisms gradually dissolve materialialistic propensities, illusions and obscurities and instill clarity of vision and bestow the necessary strength to withstand the strain involved in the trial. Satbhishak symbolized by thousand

stars and under the regency of Varuna reveals to each individual the ray of the star on which the individual is intended to unfold his uniqueness; the actual process by which the image slumbering in the stone, as Nietzsche would like to describe the process, is beset with many heart wrenching experiences full of excruciating pain and sorrow. Saints and seers knowing the secret laws of this transformation adapt themselves with these laws and follow the path of righteousness, austerities and sacrifices while the common man unaware of the occult laws undergoes untold sufferings involuntarily. When the egos leave Scorpio and enter Sagittarius, they begin their Sattwic journey.

Moolam means 'the root', 'the trunk of a tree' or 'the foundation of an edifice'; it represented the culmination of Tamasic phase of evolution when the ego moved involuntarily by the sheer momentum of past karmic impulsion. During the Sattwic phase, the ego takes its life in its own hands. It divides its future course of action. It divides the quantum of suffering it wanted to undergo and the magnitude of deprivations it hoped to bear. This is the major difference between the Tamasic and Sattwic phases of evolutions.

The results of the various austerities mentioned above may not appear so distinct in all cases. There are wide variations among the different individuals depending upon their uniqueness. The two main streams of evolutionary egos who are moving on the path of withdrawal or the Nvriti Marg and on the path of material involvement or the Pravritti Marg experience the results to some extent differently during this phase of Sattwic evolution. The former group of egos which has acquired sufficient merit and is prepared to take up the austerities and sacrifices needed for self-unfoldment and spiritual attainments gradually receives direct guidance from the individual Guide Standing at the helm of each specific Ray to protect, strengthen and guide every Single member of the group. But the course of unfoldment for the latter group is through the path of struggle, frustration and sorrows. The impact of sufferings on this path is very vague and they affect the individuals on it very feebly but slowly and steadily they are flown towards the goal. But in the case of extraordinary individuals who have developed their sensitivity and are introspecting, then even if they are still attracted to their material rewards and mundane experiences, they are in the beginning led to deeper immersion in materiality and are accorded material prosperity, social Status, public approbation and are accorded material prosperity, social Status, public approbation and much sensuous gratifications but sooner or later they are led to frustration and sorrows in their conquests and achievement forcing them to look within¹ and think about the causes of their personal problems. Even in their instances, the various asterisms ultimately lead them towards their spiritual destiny. Both the groups of egos are gradually, sooner or later, led to their ultimate goal where they are able to regain their pristine innocence and the final beatitude.

SAGITTARIUS (Dhanu)

(240°00'-270°00')

Scorpio and Sagittarius are the two most mystic signs of the Zodiac which affect the evolutionary direction of the egos in an important manner. But the impulses they generate are extremely difficult to decipher and describe. Their impact on human psyche is deep and enduring but their external expressions are not easily discernable. The astrological indications of these signs are often 'blinds', more intended to conceal their basic features than to inform their motivating impetus. The exoteric astrology described Sagittarius as possessing dazzling radiance, fiery by dement, Kashatriya (warrior) by caste Classification, holding a bow and wandering on the earth. The last qualification which apparently is very vague and abstract contains within it the central motivating force of the sign. All other attributes of Sagittarius are in fact only external expressions of its central core allegorised as holding a bow in its hand and fighting its terrestrial battles and powerfully exploring the secret powers of Nature contained in man and in his surroundings. Scorpio under Jyestha revealed the possibility of securing command over these latent powers in man; it gave the individual an insight into the Serpent Fire coiled round his spinal cord which when aroused could put under his command immense power of control. The possession of this power required much control over one's involuntary reflexes, austere discipline of his astro-mental vagaries and perseverance in altruistic activities till the very end. Sagittarius stood for strict control over one's involuntary reflexes, rigid regulation of one's physical movement, channelising of one's consciousness in concentrated efforts towards the ultimate destiny flashed earlier under Scorpio upon his inward eye. This concentrated effort for the exploration of one's hidden precious gem (which symbolized Ardra) could carry the Sagittarius aspirant to many desolate terrains meeting unsuspected foes and fighting ones way like John Bunyan's pilgrim but holding a bow in his hand. It is the search for the Truth and the discovery of the Self which serves as the fulcrum

around which all influences under, Sagittarius veer; its fiery dement as well as its belonging to the Kshatriya caste reflect the same central core.

Sagittarius fights to find out the Truth; it encourages austerities, religious observances and a reorientation of one's approach to life. It assists Performance of Yajnas, religious sacrifices, for the purpose of retrieving one's pristine innocence and freedom. The fire within Sagittarius is irresistible, it may sometime seem dormant but could never be extinguished without accomplishing its task. Sagittarius is opposed to materiality and it inspires the individual to strive towards Light, Power and Delight. It represents the turning point in the life of an aspirant. At this stage the motivation of action changes from material prosperity and social Status to spiritual illumination and unification with the Supreme Power.

At the Sagittarius stage, the individual still meets and works out his past karmic accumulations. The dark clouds of Tamasic Vrittis, the past attachments, temptations and obscurities produced by *Deha Vasana*, binding fondness for the self, *Lok Vasana*, societal desires and attachments, and *Shastra Vasana*, restrictive impulses of scriptures and rituals create adamant problems. Often they are aggressive, if not demonic, in their impact. The determination to seek Liberation and attain Light, Power and eternal delight challenges and invoke these concealed age-old dark obscurities and illusions to arise with great virulence but the seer-will and determination to attain the desired goal also simultaneously produce equal and opposite force. The struggle between the past proclivities and the new aspiration for attaining one's final destiny stirs the inner core of the individual. In weaker egos, this stage may reflect spiritual professions but the personal action and behavior show contrary features. The advanced egos would however, persevere to resolve the contradiction and sacrifice their personal conveniences and interests for attaining their ideal despite discouraging reactions and resistances of their friends and relations.

Whatever the external condition at the initial stage of Sagittarius, the individual would gradually become resolute, determined and seized with the urge for a higher Status in life, greater spiritual power and more illumination. The inner light begins to shine gradually and the second phase of transformation begins to make brighter prospect. At this phase, the individual begins to appear different from his companions and others; He begins to show his egoic uniqueness. This is the phase of new vision, new enthusiasm and more meaningful change in one's mundane experiences. The various events of his life, one's successes and failures now begin to open in an insidious manner, unknown and unexpected, the door of his inner perception. His physical life begins to extend and merge in another subtler realm pervading the whole range of his physical experiences. His sensitivity is greatly intensified and the sense organs made highly acute. Sometimes, knowingly or unknowingly, he begins to receive intonations and impressions from the other world. Although the process by which the outer experiences are interpreted and carried to his Higher Triad namely Atma-Buddhi-Manas remains vague, he begins to observe his life very objectively. He finds contradictions in his aspirations and his actual responses to life-events. He becomes aware of contradictions between the animal nature of his personality and inner divinity of his astro-mental aspirations. At Sagittarius, the impact of spiritual transformation begins by affecting the higher mind and psychology first while the physical reactions to everyday occurrences are produced as a result of inertia momentum. A discordant note in his life is therefore present.

When the individual begins to take his life seriously and endeavours to direct his external responses according to his inner insight, a new phase of psychological transformation begins to take place. The third stage of Sagittarius is marked by a new direction in life. The individual becomes tense, the string of his heart is stretched to vibrate to the slightest Sensation. Symbolically, this Situation is represented by Arjuna, the hero of the Mahabharata, Standing erect fully positioned to shoot his arrow to his distant goal. Sagittarius is also known as Dhanvi, which means one who shoots from the bow. To become a good archer, one has to be very disciplined, make many sacrifices and undergo severe training. Sagittarius represents the stage of spiritual archery which in occult literature is known as the phase of Discipleship.

Discipleship is a highly spiritual stage of evolution; its psychological requirements are difficult to convey. Sankaracharya listed several qualifications which are essential for those who aspire after liberation and self-realization. These qualifications have to be acquired before the Teacher Standing at the helm of each Ray of human development could take hold of the disciple and guide him to his ultimate destiny. At this stage, a very close relationship is established between the Teacher and the

disciple. Sagittarius inculcates these qualities and prepares the individual for this kind of spiritual training. Even astrologically, Sagittarius is associated with reverence to gods, striving after spiritual enlightenment, improvement in one's behaviour and conduct, association with god-men, acquisition of spiritual merits and wisdom. The astrological texts also speak of Serpent (Naga), Yama's vehicle (Manisha a buffalo) as well as of spiritual anointings and other occult initiatory rites. These are merely suggestive signals to describe the spiritualizing process by which psychological orientation enables the individual to establish harmony and affinity with finer forces of the subtler realm. Sagittarius makes an individual even if he does not strive for mystical attainments, serious minded, one-pointed and righteous who often secures wealth, affluence and decorations from the State. Discipleship reveals a State of the mind which recognized the futility of materialistic attainments; it acknowledged, sometimes unconsciously, the existence of Divine Brotherhood of Adepts who are helping the humanity; it realized the possibility of Coming in close relationship with this Brotherhood, and it inspires the individual to make necessary preparations for establishing this relationship. This aspiration towards a firm bond with the Occult Hierarchy is the main object of Sagittarius, which is fostered assiduously by the different asterisms operating within this region.

MOOLAM

(240°00'-253°20')

Sagittarius comprises Moolam, Purava Ashada, and first quarter of Uttar Ashada. The Sanskrit word Moolam means 'a root', 'the lowest edge', 'the extremity of anything', 'the beginning', 'a shrub', or 'a creeper'. As an asterism, the 19th asterism marked the beginning of Sattwic impulses which radically altered the direction of the soul's evolutionary course and pushed it towards a course that ultimately took into *Mooksha*, Liberation. Moolam provides the base for the harmonising process. It is the root of the spiritual unfoldment, the beginning of the growth and unfoldment of one's imprisoned splendour. This process operates on the background of very large karmic accumulations. The dissolution of these karmic sedimentations creates explosive situations. It is for this reason that Moolam is greatly dreaded. It is often suggested that Moolam means Ravana, the Brahman king of Sri Lanka who had abducted Ram's wife Sita and in the war that ensued he was defeated and killed by Ram. Ravana was born under Moolam and he belonged to the distinguished Rakshasa lineage. He abducted the wife of Ram, the most important king of the solar dynasty, who was even considered an *avatara* of lord Vishnu. Ravana was highly learned and well versed in scriptures and Vedic rituals. He was so powerful that even gods were described as holding menial offices at his household. It is mentioned that Agni, the fire-god, was his cook, Varuna, the regent of the sea, supplied water to his palace, Kuvera, the celestial treasurer, was his half-brother who supplied him whatever money was required for the court, and Vayu the god of wind, swept his palace, and so on. This Situation epitomizes the material power at the disposal of the Moolam individual. The production and availability of so much material gift and power, as a matter of fact should not make Moolam an asterism to be dreaded, but the fear aroused by it is due to some other and very powerful reasons.

The above story of Ravana has several aspects. Ravana belonged to the Rakshasa race but was a Brahman by caste, highly learned in scriptures and proficient in Tantric siddhis. Moolam comes after the final fructification of Tamasic proclivities. Such attainments make the individual aware of his spiritual possibilities. The knowledge of the ultimate is so inspiring that the asterism encourages the individual even to sacrifice his everything, like a member of the suicide squad, he is prepared to destroy himself in order to attain the goal envisioned. The process of transformation is so devastating that it makes the asterism much dreaded. When an individual becomes god-intoxicated and is enthused to attain the Ultimate, he is prepared to annihilate himself. There have been many instances of such god-intoxicated saints whose consciousness was completely absorbed in the thought of their god. Such is the impulse aroused by Moolam; it puts the individual on a completely different track.

Moolam represents the initial phase of Sattwic impulsion. It creates an explosive Situation. It introduces a radical change; the inertial movement operative under Tamasic Impulses is over and voluntary decision of the nature of seer-will relating to dissolving of the various material sheaths is taken. It changes the very lifestyle of the person. He becomes so much overwhelmed and absorbed in the thought of the majesty and puissance of the ultimate destiny that he becomes psychologically identified with it. At this stage, the individual becomes indifferent to his physical wellbeing and he often totally neglects it. Ravana who personified Moolam on realising the glory and bliss of the ultimate destiny awaiting every human individual became so much overwhelmed with the urge to

purify and spiritualise himself in the shortest possible time that he abducted the wife of Lord Ram who had taken his incarnation, Avatara, at that time, aroused his (Ram's) enmity against him (Ravana) and got killed by Ram which qualified him to attain the highest bliss instantaneously. His demonic *ahamkara*, egotism or the sense of I-am-ness, was thus in a dramatic and explosive manner quickly eliminated and his Sattwic *vritti*, a harmony nature, blossomed forth like lightning. The entire process was certainly explosive but that is precisely what Moolam does: the stupendous task of initiating the spiritualizing process and cleansing of the past karmic sediments begins with a turbulence.

Moolam also means a shrub, a thicket, or a creeper. They refer to psychological changes that occur at this stage. They initiate a growth process which at the beginning often appears inconsequential and it only gradually extends in several directions. The tiny creeper ultimately spreads out on a massive scale. The transmutation under Moolam becomes evident only towards the end. The beginning of Moolam seems innocuous but towards the end it becomes all consuming. The shrub, the thickets and the bushes suggest another aspect of this asterism: it opens the possibility of 'initiation' in Mystery Schools. The angels of the Lord appeared to Moses in 'a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush'. Such experience eludes all rational explanations, but they destroy materialistic veil, enlarge the spiritual vision, unfold the latent powers and instill confidence in oneself. In the process, egotism of the individual is dissolved and in due course it is completely wiped out. These are very painful experiences. But they are extremely important for the spiritual unfoldment. Egotism is the root cause of spiritual ignorance, Avidya, which has to be dissolved before the eyes can see and wisdom realised. It requires that every trace of self-centredness and the sense of separateness is eliminated. The practice of righteousness, piety and spiritual unfoldment necessary for producing a spiritual base requires a radically different kind of mind: highly sensitive, sharply intelligent and not tethered to one's attractions and repulsions. The preparations and the initiatory rites, according to ancient scriptures, are made at desolate places, barren deserts, high mountain peaks and secret caves, and at special shrubs and thickets where divine downpour can be experienced without any polluting influence. The candidature for these mystic initiations requires strict control of one's involuntary instincts, austere personal discipline, isolation of the individual from the common people and human society, special attention to personal magnetism and such other matters of strict inner or psychological preparations. These conditions are fulfilled under Moolam. The mental turbulence, psychological introversion, personal purification and one-pointedness are some of the effects evident under this asterism. Moolam marks out the stage where egotism born of ignorance is destroyed, importance of physical life is reduced and firm foundation of Sattwic impulses is laid down. They lead to transcendence over one's little self, and over limitations of sense-perceptions and the distortions caused by sensations (Tanmatras), sense-organs (Indriyas), and different elements (Bhutas). When complete control over Rajasic and Tamasic manifestative forces is established, it could be possible to have clarity of perception and truth of self-realization. Moolam attempts to generate those conditions which could help the individual to control and counteract the immaterialising involuntary impulses.

Moolam lies completely within Sagittarius owned by Jupiter. The asterism itself is ruled by Ketu; Nritya presides over it as its Vedic deity. But Nritya in the Vedas is described as an opposing force. The ancient seers considered it a powerful demon. It appears like dark clouds impeding the spiritual growth and creating impediments to inner self-exploration. Nritya means decay, destruction, a calamity, an imprecation, and a curse. Mythologically, Nritya is a goddess personifying Death. It is even regarded as a wife and sometimes as a daughter of A-Dharma, not-righteousness. Bharani, the second asterism, was assigned to the Death-God, Yama; that was at the stage of entering into objective or the phenomenal existence. Bharani is concerned with preservation of the creative germ in the immensity of Void. At Moolam, the death-goddess Nritya assumes Charge of the ego when it aspires to get back to its subjective stage of pristine innocence. At this stage, the goddess is described as a demoness, a mighty power determined to destroy. But it destroys the (unreal) external super impositions over one's real-self. This darker force, the power that does not allow illusions to survive, is necessary for ushering a new dawn of self-realization, a process that commences with the conclusion of Tamasic impulsions.

Furthermore, Bharani had a constructive role: Yama at that stage gave a new life, a fresh cycle of phenomenal existence through which greater depths of one's divine nature were unfolded. Yama releases human beings from restrictions. Yama is considered a terror but not a curse while Nritya is considered a calamity, a curse. The enigma can be explained according to one's Standpoint on life. The impact of Nritya becomes clearer when we examine the nature of the asterism in greater details.

The planetary ruler of the asterism is Ketu which leads to contemplation. It is related with mentation. The mind of the individual becomes active under Ketu. Under its influence one begins to ponder over one's various experiences and delve deep in abstract principles. During this period, the horizon of individual's consciousness expands very widely and he begins to examine each of his experiences very minutely. Such a mind does not accept any given explanation without serious questioning; he does not accept any traditional belief or sanctions blind-fold. The questioning attitude under Ketu makes the individual an original thinker. When he progresses in the god-ward direction he may accept many of his, most atrocious conclusions, he may even agree with most uncommon precepts, if these harmonize with his own reasoning and if he is convinced of their validity. This attitude of the individual often makes him bizarre or wayward which sometimes is even considered unique and original, but at the base of it there is his determination to follow only the promptings of his own inner voice. Ketu's most important impulse is to make the individual inward looking and to accept his own conclusions and his own inner promptings as the guide to his actions and behaviour. This feature of the individual's character is greatly emphasised under Moolam. This asterism begins to make the individual introspective, guided by his own inner light, and unconcerned to a great extent about the world opinion and social mores. The four quarters of Moolam are governed by Mars, Venus, Mercury and Moon. These planets are related with externalisation, psycho-social expansion and intuitive insight. They do not operate like Jupiter which rules over Sagittarius: Jupiter works for consolidation, preservation and protection of what has been achieved. Externalisation of the inner nature and the preservation of the existing conditions are opposing impulses. Their interactions lead to stormy conditions prevailing under the asterism. The turbulence arises due to unsettling of the age-old attitudes and the thinking process and social relationships. The new inspiration for the egoic unfoldment Springs from the spirit of righteousness and deeper understanding of exoteric religious principles, traditional beliefs and social mores. These factors are evident in the inner spirit of revolt, the urge to express one's own individuality and the direction of one's own egoic pilgrimage aroused under the four quarters of the asterism. The interaction between the planetary rulerships over the sign and the different quarters of the asterism produced much disturbances at different levels which are the inevitable expressions of the new orientation beginning to take place under the Sattwic impulses. Moolam marks the beginning of Sattwic Attributes. It finally lands the ego to the attainment of Moksha, Libeation. The various stellar Stimuli that follow Moolam are necessary to produce the required psychological transformations. These changes help the individual to absorb the supramental influences. At Moolam stage, the most momentous feature is the decision taken by the individual to follow perseveringly the course of arduous preparations. Realising the difficulties of the Path, he begins to acquire one-pointedness which is related with several other qualities and changes in the psycho-mental make up. This re-orientation changes the quality of the individual's mind and pattern of his relationships. The Stimulus towards one-pointedness is abundantly strengthened by Sagittarius. This is the core of the Sagittarius impulse which earned for it the appellation of Dhanvi which means an archer.

Moolam is symbolized by a lion's tail as well as by the goad of an elephant. These two Symbols very succinctly describe the astro-mental conditions under Moolam. Whenever a lion's tail is agitated, the animal is aroused to its full ferocity. Once the past Tamasic accumulations are stirred up, it creates turbulence in life; the past rises in full fury to stop the spiritual aspiration and to distract the person from his goal. But the impulse also makes the individual determined and strong to confront the difficulties and to meet the challenge. The elephant's goad is painful in its effect but it helps the animal to follow the desired track. Moolam represents the innate urge to move forward towards the ultimate goal in spite of innumerable difficulties of the Path. It is like agitating the lion's tail but its overall thrust is like the elephant's goad which directs the individual in such a manner that his eccentricities, personal aberrations, ferocity of egotistic assertions and astro-mental resistances are checked and the individual is led towards harmonisation with the universal self. The most important impact of Moolam is in changing the direction of the individual's quest; he is now 'goaded' towards seeking his fulfillment in harmony with the universal self, rather than remain indulgingly in his personal gratifications.

The urge towards spiritual enlightenment and the determination to mould one's life according to the law of universal harmony produce resistance from the accumulated Tamasic Attributes. The early turbulence in the life of a neophyte reflects the contradictions between his inner resolve and the outer reactions to it. It has been well allegorised by the demon-goddess Nrithi who represents a contradiction; the identity between godly aspirations and demonic tendencies. Nrithi, as indicated earlier, was born of A-Dharma, non-righteousness. The Vedic metaphysics denies the concept of sin but it accepts the possibility of the absence of righteousness, A-Dharma. That which opposed the Nature's harmonious impulses is A-Dharma: it refers to a life in ignorance, materiality and self-seeking egotism. These are

the results of Tamasic Attributes and are important, rather essential, for egoic growth at a particular phase of its evolutionary journey. But at time Moolam stage, these accumulation of the past, the progeny of materiality and ignorance have to dissipate before the dawn of self-realization and the beginning of righteous living. When the ego aspires towards such a goal, it invokes beneficence of higher powers reflected in himself by his higher trinity—Atma-Buddhi Manas. The descent of superconscious arouses the darker clouds or materialistic non-righteous subconscious forces. The Moolam asterism thus becomes a battleground, a kind of the churning of the ocean, allegorised by the regency of Nritya, over the asterism. The outcome of this turbulence is intensely disturbing and demonic because of the tenacity with which it resists the aspirations of the candidate to blossom in Light, Power and Delight. The deity is considered a female, a daughter of A-Dharma, the basic nature of a female is to give birth to a new being, the nature of the child would however, depend upon many diverse factors. Nritya is tenacious, almost invincible. The scriptures have described these darker forces as powerful to overcome even the Devas, the Sattwic forces, unless they, the Devas, received help and succour from still higher powers. Nritya produced the war between the lower quaternary formed by past Rajasic and Tamasic forces and the higher trinity representing the Atma-Buddhi-Manas which channelises the descent of superconscious. This heralds advent of a new impulse, new Situation and a new understanding. Nritya operates in close collaboration with heaven and the earth and guides the spiritual forces towards their fruition. Nritya has also the assistance of Ketu, the Shadow planet which leads to mentation and retrieval of the secret wisdom. Alongwith great stellar powers such as Jupiter and Ketu, Nritya produces an extension of pure consciousness which leads to the attainment of spiritual insight. The elephant's goad, which symbolized Moolam, suggested that the difficulties created by Nritya leads to the expansion of the mental horizon and impels the neophyte into Purva Ashada which has the power to give deeper understanding of the life-process and greater insight into universal harmony.

PURVA ASHADA

(253°20'-266°40')

Under Purva Ashada, the turbulence begins to subside and a more stable relationship is established between the outer and the inner, as well as between the individual and his immediate surrounding. The candidate under Moolam knocked at the door of self-knowledge and the portals of the outer courtyard are now opening and the psychological conflicts are clearing away. But the individual has to consolidate his efforts and energy for the task ahead. Purva Ashada points to various dimensions of this new awakening with expanding horizon of new experiences.

Ashada is a name of the month representing the rainy season. Purva Ashada means the early phase of the season. The asterism Purva Ashada refers to the early part of this change associated with the advent of the Moonsoon. The moist atmosphere is very helpful for the sprouting of seeds and for increasing the sensitivity of one's sense organs. Ashada also refers to the Palasa-wood staff carried by some ascetics. During the month of Ashada, the moisture in the atmosphere reduces the heat, provides relief to the people, makes the land fertile for the already sown seeds to sprout and the strong staff of the ascetic supports the tired limbs of the itinerant ascetics. The asterism represents reduction in emotional tension, fructification of spiritual efforts, further externalisation of latent creative energies, and the strengthening of supportive influences in counteracting Tamasic impulses.

The presiding deity of Purva Ashada is Aapas, the water-god. Almost every religious scripture has given water much importance in cosmogenetic process. It is often considered the basic element of manifestation. The Indian mythology spoke of Narayana, the second aspect of the Hindu Trinity, concerned with preservation of the universe, floating on waters before the beginning of manifestation. Even during the Varaha-Kalpa, the same lord appeared in the form of a boar and raised the earth out of the waters (of Deluge). Aapas is the foundation on which the manifestation sustains itself. Scandinavian scriptures related the honey-dew that fell during the hours of night with humidity of the atmosphere functioning like the passive principles of creation out of water. Moses taught that only Earth and Water could bring into existence a living soul. H.P. Blavatsky stated that Fire, Water, and Air were the primeval cosmic trinity. Water among them, according to her, was the female element, the universal matrix, or the Great Deep in which lie the latent Spirit and Matter.

The primeval water which was energised by Aapas, the water-god, was not merely a physical combination of two gases, but it combined with these constituents in the Nature's Alchemical crucible, the spiritual essence which reflected within it "the honey-dew of the Scandinavians' that fell during the night from which the 'the bees' created the universe". The essence which transcended the physical

properties of the two gases of the dew-drops—the waterness of the physical water—contained within it not only the promise and potency of every quality of life but also the realization of the potency of every quality of Spirit. Water is, in fact, an important ingredient of all evolving life-particles. In the cosmogenetic process, it plays an important role of the passive creative principle, the Container or the matrix in which lie the latent promise and realization of the imprisoned splendour of all forms of creation. The regency of water-god is assigned to Purva Ashada primarily to function as the Great Deep in which the potency and realization of inherent divinity could sprout or make the early stirrings of self-unfoldment.

The water-god has been invoked in many different ways. The Vedic seers related Varuna with the vastness of the ocean while the Ganges completely dissolved sins of the past and gave fresh impetus to righteous living. The Vedic deity who presided over Purva Ashada was the personification of the very waterness of the liquid: he is related with what Paracelsus described as 'menstruum' or the universal solvent which is capable of reducing all things to their ultimate nature. The Indian seers considered Aapas as one of the five elements which constituted the universe which in association with Indriyas, the sense organs, and Tanmatras, the sensations, aroused awareness of different aspects of objective and subjective existences. Aapas was related with tongue and it gave rise to the Sensation of taste. It is in this special field that Purva Ashada is much concerned. Dr. Mees associated water with taste and sensitivity and the impact of Purva Ashada is much related with this aspect of one's psychological unfoldment. Moolam aroused impetus to proceed towards it by the most direct route; it encouraged the candidate to bear with the most distressing experiences for the purpose. Moolam deeply pulverized the individual psyche; the past karmic accumulations did not continue in the same manner as before after Moolam. The Karmic nemesis now begins to operate.

Under Purva Ashada, the struggle seems to cease and tension lessened; the vision of the ultimate destiny shines more radiantly which reinforces the urge to strive for it. The regency of Aapas does not act so much to expand the consciousness and dissolve the sins of the past, as it acts to operate on taste, the Sensation derived from tongue. This is a figurative way of describing the special manner of acquiring knowledge and sense-gratification. With tongue one experiences the objects of external Sensation and evaluates its attractiveness. The psychological orientation at this stage enables the individual to consider one's further involvements in mundane activities and relations in the new light so as to evaluate and assess their desirability from the long-term Standpoint. Aapas cleanses the consciousness, removes obscurities and increases transparency of the mind. As a result of such psychological transformations, the individual begins to consider the validity of sense gratifications, pleasures of sensations, and their relationships with his final goal much more deeply. Now, the individual begins to explore his own inner psyche and align his deeper aspirations with his everyday common behaviour. This is the beginning of Pratyahara, the withdrawal of senses from their outer movements and fixing attention to one's inner nature. At the same time, the impact of water-god also leads to the attitude of non-acquisition, Aparigraha. These psychological changes intensify one's personal deprivations and sorrow, which many Sagittarius born individuals often experience, but they also purify the heart and strengthen their idealism.

The psycho-mental orientation at Purva Ashada leads to significant unveiling of one's egoic nature, greater appreciation of social interactions, and stronger determination to pursue the goal envisioned. The individual now begins to give up his worldly possessions, but he is not indifferent to his physical or to his religious Status if he thought that the same could be helpful in fulfilling his deeper aspirations. These aspirations however, are not completely free from the desire for self glorification. All these activities, the mundane relationships, external achievements, exoteric observances and the striving after spiritual merits are often motivated, consciously or unconsciously, by the desire for self-glorification and public applause often for his spiritual strivings.

Purva Ashada functions under the regency of Aapas and water is an offspring of Moon, which reflects the rays of the Sun which represented the life-essence in every form of the manifestation. Moon showed the imprisoned splendour awaiting each form of creation but water takes this reflection of the Moon one stage further. Moon is a creative agent, it makes the latent spirit essence come to its fullness and thereby makes the divinity in man a reality. In this process of bringing to the surface what is contained within, Purva Ashada also administers the soothing balm to the blood-bath and the turbulence experienced earlier. It provides the much needed solace and encouragement. It inspires and strengthens the bleeding candidate towards his spiritual journey.

Purva Ashada does not operate in ethereal vacuum; whatever psychological and mental changes are produced by it are based on the physical base. Water needs an earthly bed for its presence and flow. Unless the individual has accumulated much terrestrial experiences and is actively engaged in worldly activities, such psychological orientations as Inspiration, vision, striving, and sorrow cannot vitally affect him. Dr Mees very well described the impulses generated by Purva Ashada when he stated that only earth and water could bring into existence the living soul. It is found at this stage that the physical surroundings, social relationships and exoteric observances along with sensual experiences and psychological reactions to worldly experiences are connected in some way or the other with taste and sensitivity, which are intimately related with water-god. In all religious rituals, water is used for purificatory preparations and for anointment: even on birth as well as death, water has an important function in transforming the human soul. This role of water is very important. At Moolam, the horse in man was consecrated to an idealistic cause. The ego is now prepared to shoot its arrow towards the divine goal.

The essential quality of water or the main function of Aapas, the water-god arises from the third force besides the two gases, which constituted the liquid. The Indian seers considered Aapas as one of the eight Vasus who attend upon Indra and personified natural phenomena; each one of the Vasus was a well identified Channel of consciousness with very well identified function. The third force which provides the essential quality of waterness related it to final goal to which its impulsion directed the universe. The basic features which (probably) is non-physical or spiritual in nature needs for its effective Operation a base. Earth, on which it could flow, it needs a form in which it could be held, without a matrix water would peter out, it must have the support of sunshine and warmth which could make it effective life-producing and life-transforming energy. The regency of Aapas presumes that the psychological transformation, namely, the physical base, a Container or matrix, and the beneficent sunshine and warmth expressed as favourable superconscient downpour are available for its fruition.

The asterism can be effective only when the necessary physical preparations as evident from purificatory purging of karmic accumulations and reversal of Tamasic Vrittis or the inertial proclivities have been completed. The individual at this stage should have developed an extraordinary sensitivity.

The planetary rulership of the asterism is assigned to Venus, the planet of sensitivity and emotional relationships. Venus functioning under the overall milieu created by Jupiterian Sagittarius effectively regulates such activities and social interactions. The individual under Purva Ashada becomes spiritually inclined, idealistically oriented and to a great extent outward-turned. These impulses arouse attraction towards exoteric religious rituals and observances which later on draw the individuals to an understanding of their inner, esoteric significance. Sometimes, Jupiter produces material affluence but in the course of time it leads to disappointment so that there is inner disenchantment and unveiling of enduring realities. In both the cases, material success or physical religiosity in due course guides the individual towards the unseen realities of life.

The regency of Aapas to Purva Ashada also requires the support of Mars and Sun. The impulses generated by Purva Ashada can attain their fullness under the warmth and enthusiasm of these planets. The urge to shoot the arrow towards one's distant goal, which is the primary goal of Sagittarius, can be effective when these two planets are supportive. When water representing taste and sensitivity, is vaporised and the liquid energy (representing emotion) is turned into gaseous nature (aspiration), the evolving ego is ready for the next stage of unfoldment. Under Uttara Ashada, which in fact is a complement of Purva Ashada, the candidate assumes greater responsibilities for his self-realization. Under Uttara Ashada, the Sun assumes the planetary rulership of the asterism and Vishwadeva takes its charge as the Vedic deity. The four quarters of Uttara Ashada also show some agitation in the psycho-spiritual nature of the individual for which Purva. Ashada has already laid the necessary foundation.

UTTARA ASHADA

(266°40'-280°00')

The first quarter of Uttara Ashada extending from 266°40' to the last part of Sagittarius operates under Jupiter: the sign lord as well as the planetary ruler of the first quarter of Uttara Ashada both are Jupiter, but the asterism as a whole is ruled by Sun. Any planet occupying this portion of the sign becomes Vargottama which bestows special strength to it; it emphasised the powerful influence of Jupiter on the planet thus placed. The three subsequent quarters of Uttara Ashada extended to

Capricornus owned by Saturn, but the second and the third quarters of the asterism are ruled by Saturn, while the last quarter belonged to Jupiter. These quarters are indicators of mental turmoil, intense sorrow and a feeling of great desolation. Uttara Ashada Stands for the trial of the neophyte, inevitable reaction to the candidate's one pointed efforts to attain Truth-Consciousness. During this phase, the ego passes through its hardest experiences from which if it emerges successfully, it will gradually progress towards greater light, power and harmony. In case of the candidate's failure, he would sink into oblivion and suffer immense pain. During the entire phase of the asterism, the ego completes its journey under the guidance of the Vedic deity known as Vishwadeva.

Uttara Ashada, as indicated above, represents the trial of the neophyte. The aspirant at this stage is tested for his preparedness for further spiritual advancement. It involves arousal of his good, bad and indifferent potentials. During the earlier phases of the relationship between the candidate and his Adept Teacher, no mystic trials were enacted, but the candidate is now making one-pointed, well concerted efforts for the unveiling of his pristine nature, for developing his divine Potentials which inevitably attract the attention of his egoic-guide. It sets into motion the forces which test the presence or the Sediments of his past karmic accumulations which could be burdensome during the course of his further training and development. The desire to lead a pure life with increased sensitivity and keenness to experience every event with greater intensity (under Purva Ashada) necessarily attract the occult law of testing the preparedness of the aspirant desirous of storming the citadel of nature's secret wisdom. When the raindrops fall after the summer heat, the various seeds already embedded in the ground begin to sprout. That is the stage under Uttara Ashada. But these seeds are also accompanied by the growth of weeds which needed elimination, weeding. The intensity, and seriousness of the desire to experience the splendour of inner unfoldment and self-realization accentuated the one-pointedness of the candidate essential for successfully weeding out the undesirable, unwelcome, visitors to the process of growth. With increased intensity counteracting equal and opposite obstructing forces are also generated which make the life difficult and troublesome. It is for this reason that the life of a neophyte is never peaceful. At Uttara Ashada the candidate concentrates, he takes his position to shoot the arrow towards his ultimate goal. The first quarter of Uttara Ashada marks the stage when the aspirant has set his initial steps on the Path. The planetary ruler of the sign within which this asterism operates being Jupiter and the same being the ruler of the first quarter of the asterism and the asterism as a whole being ruled by Sun, the candidate is highly strung and can snap with slightest carelessness. But the protective cover provided by Jupiter is powerful to shield the aspirant from any grueling experience. But the occult law of counter resistance has to operate and that begins to manifest at this stage. Jupiter makes the candidate earnest who is yet ignorant of the inner working of the occult laws which result as a consequence of the spiritual aspiration to wrest the secret powers from Nature and to completely overrule this involuntary impulses and rule his life by his inner-determination, the seer-will. This phase of the neophyte's life is beset with innumerable tests and tribulations none of which can be foreseen or their timings anticipated. The candidate can only make the necessary preparations by cleansing his physical and emotional life and making it extremely pure. A clean life, a pure heart, an eager intellect and an unveiled spiritual perception are his guidelines; for these he begins to make external preparations. He begins to lead an ethical life. He tries to live for others, for humanity at large. He tries to become godly. Because these are the only preparations he could make to protect himself from the onslaughts of the protectors of the Nature's secret, the Darker Forces of life. Vishwadeva helps him in making the necessary preparations.

Vishwadeva who presides over the asterism represents Truth-Consciousness in essence. The deity is essentially collectivity of the world at large. Often the deity is regarded not as one but all the beneficent forces in aggregation. Under their guidance, the candidate begins to open himself for the good of the many but so far he has only a vague notion that the purpose of life lies in working for the good of the world and for the brotherhood of mankind. Jupiter being essentially a planet of the world, it does not enable the individual to completely extricate himself from his worldly involvements; the trace of self-centredness still lingers within him. The religiosity, philanthropy and spiritual observances remain primarily at the physical level and concerned with exoteric rituals. The first quarter of Uttara Ashada brings to the surface inner aspirations which are usually interpreted in terms of external practices, and helpfulness to others at the physical level. The core of all these aspirations and actions still remains his own self. The intensity of his trials becomes evident only at later stages of the Operation of the asterism when the centre of his consciousness shifts to non-personal relationships. The remains of self-centredness provide fertile ground for the attacks of darker forces and the growth of the weeds of frustration and sorrow. The degree of transference of the centre of consciousness from personal to impersonal consideration reflects the attention of Vishwadeva(s), the guardian deities of the asterism,

that they are directing the candidate. The last portion of Sagittarius is the seat of unexpected frustrations and disenchantment with terrestrial involvement, but it also stores many mystic inspirations and spiritual illuminations.

CAPRICORNUS (Makaram)

(270° 00'-300° 00')

The ego enters Capricornus with full preparation and determination to work for the beneficent powers of Nature. It has already accepted altruism as its motivating impulse. Such an aspiration however, needs much more arduous preparation. If the object is to enroll oneself as a co-worker of higher powers, it would require complete annihilation of personality, all traces of materialistic attraction, personal human affections and denial of all sense of separateness. The aspiration can be fulfilled when the ego is ready to sacrifice itself completely at the altar of human welfare without any overt or covert, manifest or concealed, considerations for the self: this willingness and preparedness are tested before such a glorious opportunity is granted. The willingness and preparedness for achieving this mission have to be tested and this makes the life during Capricornus very difficult and full of sorrow. The tenth sign of the zodiac makes the aspirant go through the vale of sorrow and only on the conclusion of this tunnel when he comes out of it that he gains the realization of the natural harmony, divine beneficence and eternal beatitude operating as the substratum of the entire manifestation. Till the end of the tunnel is reached, the aspirant must suffer, experience pains and sorrow and persevere if he hoped to succeed and experience the glory of the new dawn.

There is much misunderstanding about the nature and basic features of the tenth sign. The Sanskrit name for it is Makaram, which commonly means a crocodile, but as H.P. Blavatsky has indicated, it does not truly reflect the characteristics of the zodiac. She indicated that in India and Egypt the mysterious order of Dhyanis connected with the Microcosmic Pentagon, the Five-pointed star representing man were connected with the crocodile, and their abode is in Capricornus. "But these are convertible terms in Indian astrology, for the tenth sign of the zodiac which is called Makara, is loosely translated 'Crocodile'. The word itself is occultly interpreted in various ways¹. T. Subba Row explained it in greater detail. He stated that the Sanskrit name for Capricornus is Ma-Kara. the first syllable of which is derived from the same root from which Maya (the creative illusion), Ma (the mother),

(1) *The Secret Doctrine*, op. cit., Vol. I., p. 266

Mamata (compassion), Manas (the creative intelligence), Mahata (universal intelligence) and similar other words were derived. The second syllable namely, Kara means hand, the organ of action. Numerically the value of Ma is five corresponding to the five elements of which the cosmos is made of. The occult and other aspects of these elements make $5 \times 2 = 10$, which is the number of the sign. According to T. Subba Row, Ma represented the five mighty creative forces of which the cosmos is built. Taken in its dual aspect, the sign Capricornus represents the sacrifice of the Heavenly Man on the Cross of Manifestation¹. He also stated that Capricornus stands for the universe symmetrically constructed in the shape of a Dodecahedron, the geometrical model imitated by the Demiurges in constructing the material universe. It seems reasonable to assume Makaram as representing simultaneously both the microcosm and the macrocosm, as external objects of perception. The tenth sign of the zodiac is a mysterious source of impulses which prepare the egos for their crucifixion so as to merge their consciousness with the cosmic consciousness and the pains and sorrows that arise under its impetus are the outcome of this process of transformation.

Capricornus is ruled by Saturn; Mars is exalted in this sign and Jupiter is debilitated here. Capricornus is classified as an earthly sign. The chief characteristic of Saturn is its destruction in order to reconstruct a new being. It represents Yama, the death-god, who is invincible working in an impersonal manner with a view to establishing natural balance and harmony. He is even worshipped as Dharmaraj, the Lord of Righteousness. He establishes right relationship among all forces in manifestation; he works out the individual karmas to make him harmonious with his ultimate destiny. Exoteric astrology makes Saturn as dark, cold and heartless. But these attributes indirectly refer to the immensity and depth of the vision of Saturn on which background it operates. Saturn is not guided by transient or ephemeral considerations; it aims at reviving the formless, spiritual vision that reflected the primeval subjective nature of the ego. Mars' exaltation in Capricornus refers to the need for courage, initiative and exploratory enterprise which Mars provides for the egos struggling in this sign; it provides the exhilarating thrill to the aspirant provided he is preparing

himself for the heavenly cross now present before him. Jupiter is debilitated in Capricornus: neither ritualistic observances nor scriptural orthodoxy or superstitious beliefs could carry the pilgrim further on his path. On this mission the strength of the ego lies in its disenchantment with material possessions, attachments with physical form, and in the cultivation of impersonal attitude to the mundane problems. Saturn's rulership on Capricornus where it prepares the egos to sacrifice themselves on the altar of the Heavenly Cross inculcates such values in them which help their union with the Universal Self. Saturn gives such a realization which is analogous to one's physical death. With such de-mystifying and purificatory blows of Yama, the evolving ego understands that his fulfillment and consequently the attainment of Divine Wisdom lie in becoming an intelligent cooperator with Nature, to be a part of the Occult Hierarchy Controlling and guiding the evolution of the universe. This is the basic impulse generated by Capricornus. This is how Capricornus aids the unfoldment of the true nature of the individual.

The Capricornus impulse works very deeply. It received from Sagittarius the animal transformed into a man which now aspires to unfold and realize its humane qualities. In order to fulfill the aspiration of the ego, Capricornus shatters the self-centred egotism and dissolves the personality in the universal life-essence. Saturn imparts spiritual wisdom; it enables the realization of the universal or the spiritual nature of man. This realization takes place when the physical attractions and conflicts are eliminated and the individual has begun to question the reality of every form of appearance. It makes him introspective, deeply thoughtful and questioning the validity and truth pertaining to every relationship; he begins to understand the underlying sorrow, depression and loneliness as the inevitable consequence of all material attachments. These experiences impel him to look within. He now tries to penetrate the Void, listen to the voice of the silence, the intonations of the cosmic music. At the Capricornus stage, the individual begins to intuit the will of the Heavenly Man.

Capricornus is ruled by Saturn but its presiding deity is Pulaha, who is one of the Prajapatis or the mind-born sons of Brahma created for assisting Him in manifesting the universe. His name is derived from a Sanskrit root which means 'to be great, large, widely extended'; the word also stood for 'a bridge'. Pulaha's wife's name was Kshama which means compassion and forgiveness but another Version of the mythology makes the name of the wife as 'Gati' which means 'movement' or 'entrance'. One can surmise from these mythological references that the tenth sign of the zodiac is a way or an entrance to something great and expansive; the aroma of compassion would pervade throughout its course. The trials and tribulations experienced under Saturn and overseen by its presiding deity Pulaha would be aroused by a feeling of compassion. There would be an inducement in these difficulties to open out to something highly expansive, helpful in creative process and receiving compassionate consideration for attaining higher powers. The three asterisms comprising the sign help in this blossoming or growth. The three quarter of Uttara Ashada (270° 00' -280° 00') dissolves the personality to the vastness of consciousness; Shravana (280° 00' -293° 20') enables the ego to listen to the voice of the silence and hear to the inner melody of the cosmic harmony and attune oneself to the faint wholeness of one's inner spirit. Finally under the two quarters of Dhanistha (293° 20' -300° 00') the individual becomes receptive to Divine message received at his subjective levels these asterisms gradually prepare the ego so that it could qualify appropriately to work as a conscious cooperator with Nature's finer forces and higher occult beings.

UTTARA ASHADA (Contd.)

(266°40'-280°00')

The intense expansion of consciousness resulting from the dissolution of personality in the universal matrix leads the individual now to receive flashes of the cosmic unity at various levels of manifestation. It is attained after excruciating pain and total destruction of all attachments made so far. The asterism under which this impulse reaches the ego has four well differentiated streams although in actual Operation they seem to merge in one another in an imperceptible manner. The first quarter of Uttara Ashada (266° 40' - 270° 00'), which lies in Sagittarius, provides the vision of universal harmony and inspires the ego to make one-pointed efforts to self-realization. The second quarter (270° 00' - 273° 20') operates like the Alchemical crucible in which the individuals who so far nurtured self-centred personal materialistic involvements are dissolved into their basic Sattwic constituents. It reveals to them the illusory character of their life and the transitoriness of their material objectives, which they

had so far feverishly pursued. It is a painful realization: those who overcome the sorrow and proceed further exploring their inner-self, they are increasingly immersed in humanitarian activities. They begin to dedicate their life to some higher cause. But those who are unable to bear the strain of psychological churning, often become cynics, sexual wrecks, frustrated and intensely self-centred individuals. These characteristics are evident even in those individuals who are outward turned and are also trying to do some kind of social work. It is for this reason that many individuals under this Situation display marked contradictions in their personal life, in their profession and in their actual relationships. The third quarter of Uttara Ashada (273° 20' - 276° 40') impels the individuals to act so as to develop their latent faculties, and the fourth stream (276° 40' - 280° 00') brings the struggling egos nearer to the Occult Hierarchy.

Uttara Ashada operates under the overall supervision of the Vedic Deity Vishwadeva (s) but very little is known about this deity. Information about him is available only through a few indirect sources. Sri Aurobindo equated them with "all the gods or the all-gods". He felt uncertain about the nature and identity of this deity. According to him, "it has been disputed whether these Vishwadeva(s) form a class by themselves or are simply the gods in their generality". He concluded that "I take that this phrase means the universal collectivity of the divine powers; for this sense seems to me best to correspond to the actual expression of the hymns in which they are invoked". According to Sri Aurobindo, Vishwadevas are called for a general action, which supports and completes the functions of the Ashwinis and Indra. Vishwadevas are described by him as "the fosterers and increasers of man and upholders of his labour and efforts in the work, the sacrifice"¹. Dowson has given some further details about this godhead. He stated that Vishwadevas form a class nine in number. They are addressed as "preservers of men and bestowers of rewards". In later times, according to Dowson, Vishwadevas were considered as a class of deities particularly interested in exequial offerings². One can take that these Vishwadevas are personifications of certain categories of divine forces intimately connected with evolutionary impulses on earth having special functions relating to funeral rites. The exequial attribute of Vishwadevas reveals deeper significance of this godhead.

The Puranic stories are more enlightening. The Vishnu Purana as well as Padma Purana give details of these deities. They have mentioned that the Vishwadevas were born when Brahma had to accomplish the task of starting generative human cycle of manifestation afresh because the Ascetic Kumars having adjudged the copulative generation as unholy act refused to participate in Brahma's plan so the latter had to create several other categories of devas. Vishwadevas and Prajapatis belonged to this category of godheads. In this scheme of creation, Brahma created Daksha (= expert) and married him to Virini (= barren soil, desert) who begot sixty daughters. Twentyseven of these later were married to Soma (Moon) and became the Nakshatras, the asterisms; ten of the daughters of Daksha and Virini were married to Dharma (Yama, Saturn, Righteousness). One of the wives of Dharma named Vishwas (=universal feminine generatrix) produced Vishwadevas. These names are allegorical references to personifications of various creative forces. Vishwadevas can meaningfully be considered as evolutionary impetus emerging from the generic force of Dharma, righteousness. The relationship between Vishwadevas and the funeral

(1) The Secret of the Veda. op. cit, p.82

(2) A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion. John Dowson. Delhi, p 363

rites as suggested by Dowson seems not only to relate Vishwadevas with Yama or Saturn but also with their harmonising impact in the evolutionary process. The burial rites aim at guiding the mortal beings leave behind them the physical sheaths which were sacrificed to their elemented reservoir, these rites guided the remaining incarnating essence to proceed further to merge in its spiritual essence. This seems to be the basic function of Uttara Ashada operating under Vishwadevas.

The second quarter of Uttara Ashada makes the personality of the individual to dissolve under the painful decree of Dharmaraja Saturn ruling over Capricornus. The pain makes the individual so desolate and desperate that he cries and strikes at the closed doors of Nature to seek Reality and to understand the universal plan of life. It makes him extremely introvert digging much deeper within his own self. The third quarter of Uttara Ashada introduces a change: the mood of psychological depression is stirred and the individual begins to do something about it. The induced activity leads him further on the path of self-knowledge. He begins to pull out from his deeper depths his latent potentials and directs them to social welfare activities. There is now an urge to do something useful for the mankind, for the good of the mankind without seeking any overt reward. Now he seeks unity with universal life-force. Gradually the superconscious begins to descend on him and his consciousness expands in many new directions. The purpose of his life begins to unfold before him. At the fourth

quarter of the asterism, this comprehension becomes a well-established reality. The ego develops its spiritual awareness. The attention of the Occult Hierarchy is drawn to it. He joins the early stage of what in occult literature is known as the Probationary Path. It means he is put on apprenticeship and is examined and is tested regarding his preparedness for closer relationship and grant of higher powers. But the tests and trials are done without any conscious awareness of it on his part. Depending upon his comprehension and qualifications acquired, this relationship becomes closer; he is brought closer to the Spiritual Brotherhood and becomes its mouthpiece in the outer world. The union leads to the blending of his personal consciousness with the consciousness of the Inner Government of the World.

The individual working for spiritual ideals is given special attention by the finer forces of Nature. His personal conveniences are no more any consideration for the work that he performs. He is now working for the welfare of the humanity in active Cooperation with Nature's beneficent forces. Uttara Ashada pours so much of universal energy, Light and Power, that the individual becomes a part of Vishwadevas themselves. He is moved forward by the desire to comprehend his own higher nature and the Will of God for him. Under Uttara Ashada a strong link is established between one's inner or higher nature and divine overpowering life-essence descending on him. His consciousness becomes highly receptive to various events and forces operating on life which exist beyond the burial ground. A new experience of Truth-consciousness dawns upon him. Under Vishwadevas the Truth-Consciousness which dawns upon the individual comprehends the mysteries of life and death, and transcends death. It radically affects the life, relationships and activities of the individual. With such an orientation, the ego enters the realm of Shravana, still operating under Capricornus, but with a marked difference in one's inner understanding and extension of consciousness.

SHRAVANA

(280° 00' -293° 20')

Shravana, the 22nd asterism, refers to passivity in listening to the Divine Melody. The word Shravana means 'to listen' but on probing deeper into the State of the mind which makes the listening possible, the basic features of the asterism begin to emerge into view and the seemingly simple-looking asterism becomes highly mystic in nature.

The receptivity of the candidate is a basic requirement for his admission into Mystery Schools. The Upanishads spoke of the teacher and the students listening together. The Buddhists stipulated the candidates to the Mysteries to spend several years just listening to the discussions and discourses in the School without opening their Ups. The aspirants to spiritual knowledge are told that "the first duty of a chela (= disciple) is to hear without anger or malice anything the guru (= Teacher) may say". The psychological frame of the mind needed to acquire this simple qualification requires intense restraint and objectivity in one's observances. The process by which this transformation is achieved makes the individual receptive to cosmic forces but it requires that his physico-psychological sheaths are thoroughly cleansed and all the past proclivities related with head-learning completely dissolved. It leads to complete cessation of the memory of the past which in a way implies a kind of a new birth itself. At Shravana the candidate attains a new psychological birth, a kind of rejuvenation.

The great Vedantic teacher Sankaracharya emphasized the need to transcend all physical, social and scriptural attachments before embarking upon spiritual exploration. These attachments distort one's vision. One cannot see Truth through these veils. When the mind is constantly chattering and projecting itself, its own memories and knowledge, it cannot perceive that which lies beyond oneself, beyond one's past, and beyond the psychological boundary of the known. One cannot see the Truth as long as such sediments of the past reside in human consciousness. These attachments are so strong in every individual that he cannot easily transcend them. Only through serious traumas or through intense pain and suffering the roots of these obscurities can be loosened. When an individual is confronted with severe misfortune, deprivation of worldly possessions and social Status, and he receives emotional setbacks and religious disillusionment, then he is thrown in the vale of shadow. Emergence from it is like a new lease of life, like a new birth. That is the situation which proceeds before the individual can listen to the Cosmic Music and receive intonations from the world beyond.

The Light on the Path warned that the disciple must have his feet washed in the blood of his heart before standing in the holy presence of the holy Master. Many such warnings are given in different scriptures indicating the need to sacrifice one's most precious possession before receiving the divine

benedictions. Sorrow is an inevitable experience which cleanses the various sheaths and dissolves obscurities. Only after such devastating personal experiences the personality dissolves and universality of Truth-Consciousness dawns on the individual. H.P.Blavatsky mentioned that "unless the flesh is passive, head cool, the soul as firm and pure as flaming diamond, the radiance will not reach the Chamber, its sunlight will not warm the heart, nor will the mystic sounds of the Akashic heights reach the ear, however, eager, at the initial stage. Unless thou hearest, thou canst see. Unless thou seest, thou canst hear". Stated simply, an Indian Teacher mentioned that "there is one general law of vision (physical and mental or spiritual) but there is a qualifying special law providing that all visions must be determined by the quality or grade of man's spirit and soul and also by the ability to translate divine qualities of waves of astral light into consciousness". The act of hearing without any distortions can be possible only after complete dissociation of personal likes and dislikes, attractions and repulsions, as well as cessation of projections of oneself on the world outside. The act of dissociation is difficult to practice.

J. Krishnamurti emphasized during his discourses the need for listening to others, to be sensitive to the world around oneself and to see things as they are rather to see them as one wants them to be. H.P.Blavatsky also stated that the pupil must regain the child-state he has lost before the first sound can fall upon his ear. The acquisition of this child-like innocence requires immense preparations. One has to kill out desire, kill love for life, kill in oneself all memories of past experiences and one has to destroy one's lunar body before one is capable to cleanse one's mind-body and observe things as they are. It has been mentioned that one cannot hear unless one can see, and one cannot see unless one hears. This duality between hearing and seeing is based on the fact that the clarity of vision and reality of an experience can be had only with complete identification with the object perceived. That can happen only when the separate, transient, phenomenal self is completely annihilated and one has perceived the universal or the eternal spark existing in him as well as in the totality of manifestation. Shravana aims at producing this vision of unity between the little and the universal self which in the process of this transformation produces much suffering and sorrow.

Shravana occupies the prime position (280° 00' -293° 20') under Capricornus. Saturn rules over this sign, but Aquarius which follows it is also ruled by Saturn. Capricornus and Aquarius are in fact one integrated unit. Aquarius in a way is an extension of Capricornus. We have noted earlier that Capricornus arouses the urge to know, to come in direct contact with Light and Power and transcend the illusory phenomenal relationships. Uttara Ashada destroys the ephemeral personal outlook and emphasises the need to universalize one's approach to life and in consequence suffer from personal deprivations. The suffering arising from the sorrow tests the genuine nature of thirst for self-realization and awareness of Truth. At the same time, it also strengthens the self to withstand the enormous demand made on it due to its changed attitude. Under Shravana, the purificatory ordeal continues; the lunar body and the Mercurial nature of intellect are put to rest. At this age Saturn begins to destroy the age-old crystallized personality which precluded it from the realization of the divine downpour of spiritual life-force which linked the entire manifestation with the invisible thread of harmonious affinity. Realization of this unity between the self and the universal life-essence as well as the recognition of divine consciousness represented by various grades of devas and angels operating under the Occult Hierarchy aroused the aspiration for working with this group of impersonal beneficent powers. The glory of this association and the possibility of acquiring tremendous beneficence under the relationship produce great delight. The ecstasy of the descent of the super-conscious thrills the heart to sing the glory of God. The possibility of divine unity and the great ecstasy that flows from it are maddening. The individual at the following Dhanistha stage begins to operate under its impetus like a drum, a flute, a Channel for the Divinity. Such a psychological reorientation with a radically spiritualised mind-frame ushers the ego into the realm of Aquarius, still under the planetary rulership of Saturn and there the individual becomes a conscious Channel of divine downpour as he comes gradually closer and closer to the Occult Hierarchy. Capricornus and Aquarius being two zones of the same Saturnian impetus, they do not require any buffer between the two signs (as it is the case between the signs ruled by other non-lunaries).

Shravana operates within Capricornus ruled by Saturn; the asterism itself is ruled by Moon and its four quarters are controlled by Mars, Venus, Mercury and Moon. Vishnu presides over it. Moon reflects the rays of the Sun, that is, it mirrors the Truth, Power and Delight inherent in manifestation. Shravana absorbs these lunar impulses; it also presumes the presence of complete stillness of the mind and body which makes the absorption effective. Only under complete silence and attention can one receive the reflection of the supreme energy without any obscurity or distortion. Saturn makes this stillness

possible. But it is made so by destroying the personality and taking away all illusory features of it. Although Saturn is a material planet for common human beings, it remorselessly takes away material attachments from the individual making him forlorn, without any support or hope but it does so with a purpose. In the blankness of these desolate conditions when there is nothing material to hold on, the ego cries and laments but towards the end of its sorrow it surrenders to the deity and looks inwardly, to the great silence, the Void in itself. That is what Shravana does: that is the impact of Moon in relationship with this asterism.

Vishnu presides over Shravana. Among the Vedic deities, Vishnu occupies a very special position. Sri Aurobindo mentioned that Vishnu in the Vedas though mentioned sparingly had an important function. He stated that "for the formations of Brahmanapati's cow, for the actions of Rudra's force, Vishnu supplied the necessary static element - space, the ordered movements of the worlds, the ascending levels and the highest goal"¹. In the Vedic System of cosmogenesis, Brahmanapati (who later on was presented as Brahma) is the creator

(1) *The Secret of the Veda*. op. cit. p 335

by the Words: he calls light and visible cosmos out of the darkness of the inconscient ocean and speeds the formation of conscious beings upward to the Supreme Goal. For the upward movement of Brahmanapati's formations Rudra supplied the force. Since Vishnu is concerned with vortices of the limitless extension and the illusory character of the contents of this Void, Vishnu's regency over the asterism heightens the mental and the super-mental passivity and sensitivity, the individual under the asterism is exposed to the immensity of existence. He now, begins to listen to the intonations of the ascending planes and of the highest goal in life. Shravana produced the faith in the subjective wholeness with which the consciousness is concerned at the stage. With this awareness the neophyte enters Dhanistha where he starts blending his consciousness with this Wholeness. During the various phases of Shravana, the hard crust of the illusory personality is destroyed and the divine possibilities awaiting for the individual are aroused. The Great Silence descending at this stage is so piercing and awesome that the individual cries as to why has the Lord abandoned him. This cry in the wilderness expresses the greatest trial of the neophyte which Shravana aims to precipitate. Silence is indeed very trying to confront with the fullness of one's heart and mind but that is what the ego has to do at this stage.

DHANISTHA

(293°20' - 306°40')

Dhanistha extends from 293°20' to 306°40', half of which lies in Capricornus and the other half in Aquarius. Mars rules over the asterism while Saturn does so over the zodiacal sign. Dhanistha is presided over by the Vedic deity Vasu. The four quarters of it are under the control of Sun, Mercury, Venus and Mars respectively.

Following Shravana, Dhanistha is acclaimed to be the most fruitful asterism for one's egoic unfoldment. It is the positive counterpart of Shravana which is passive, receptive and sensitive to cosmic intonations of the Reality. Under Dhanistha, the subjective realization under Shravana is externalised. The individual is thrilled with the ecstatic ascent. He thirsts to hold on to this subjective upliftment. With such an urge for Liberation, the individual enters the Dhanistha zone of influence where his sense-experiences are dissolved and he begins to vibrate with the thrill of his inner ascent. He is now exposed to the guidance and regulation of Divine Forces. But these forces are difficult to absorb by an individual immersed in materialistic attachments and encased in material sheaths over his consciousness. The Dhanistha influx destroys them and the individual experiences torments of being alone.

In this struggle between the ascent resulting from the inner realization of the Reality and the resistances induced by materiality of one's personality and its sheaths, the planetary lords of the different quarters of the asterism boost up the morale of the individual. The Sun and Mercury ruled over the first two quarters of Dhanistha while Venus and Mars ruled over the third and the fourth quarters of it. The Sun illumined the mind and gave vision of the Reality - the source of Light, Power and Delight. Mercury enabled the intelligence to receive that vision and inspired the individual to work accordingly. When Dhanistha crossed into Aquarius and the ego became outward-turned trying to blend its consciousness with the universal mainstream, Venus helps to establish rapport with higher powers. Mars stirred the deeper levels of the being and externalised the exuberance that came from such a union. Half of

Dhanistha under Capricornus and the other half under Aquarius both operate under the planetary rulership of Mars which makes both parts of the asterism related with active unfoldment of consciousness compared with the previous Shravana impulse under Moon which was primarily receptive and passive.

Saturn ruled over Capricornus as well as over Aquarius. The Saturnian influence is incompatible with Martian externalisation, solar Illumination and Mercurial intelligence so they fail to transcend the Saturnian de-materialisation process. Consequently, the ever-expanding effulgence of Sun carrying manifestation to limitless expanse gets thwarted and there is recoil. The reversal creates physical hardships to the egos, which are thus pushed back, but the consciousness as reaction of it withdraws from the objective plane of existence to subjectivity where it expands inwardly, and recognizing therein the immensity of one's imprisoned splendour, the individual experiences very powerful upsurge and exposure of his so far latent faculties.

Dhanistha is presided over by Vasus*. They are personifications of natural phenomena. They are the elements which make up the universe. The Puranic stories make them cousins of Vishwadevas who presided over Uttara Ashada. Daksha had ten of his daughters got married to Dharma who begot Vishwadevas from his wife named Vishva while from his another wife he begot Vasus. Vasus are the eight shining ones ever engaged in manifestative process. Dhanistha's impulse under the Vasus leads the egos to actively associate themselves with the divine plan. At this stage, the evolving egos abandon or are forced to give up their own personal creative functions and begin to cooperate with the activities of the Vasus. So the consciousness of the individual is attuned to the divine consciousness and his psycho-mental sheaths begin to irradiate with divine effulgence.

Dhanistha is symbolized by a drum, which is a hollow wooden musical instrument with both ends covered with goat's skin. When the musician strikes the skin with his fingers or with a slendour stick, it emits different musical notes in harmony with the song that is sung either by the musician himself or someone else. These musical notes harmonize with the consciousness (song) of the musician and with his inner feelings with which the songs are attuned. This attunement was described under Punarvasu (the 7th asterism) as well as under Visakha

(*) There is no unanimity about their identity, but they are by and large considered as Apas (water), Dhruva (Pole Star), Soma (Moon), Dhara (Earth), Anita (wind), Anala (fire), Prabhu (dawn), and Prayashu (light)

(the 16th asterism). Punarvasu was symbolized by an arrow, which represented one-pointed efforts towards union with Divine Consciousness. It operated under Rajasic Attributes; Visakha operated under Tamasic Attribute when material sheaths had considerably thickened. The potter's wheel, the symbol attributed to this asterism represented exposure of material sheaths to Divine Forces in order to shape them (the sheaths represented by clay put at the centre of the potter's wheel) in whatever form the Divine Forces wanted to shape them. But drum is different. It is a medium for union with Divine Consciousness where the individual himself consciously endeavours to attune his consciousness with his inner being in harmony with intonations of his inner ruler immortal.

A drum is importantly different from a flute. The latter is much talked of in relation with Lord Krishna, who played this hollowed bamboo stick with several (seven) holes in it. When the Lord played his flute, his disciples (represented by the milkmaids, the Gopis) were attracted to him and the tune made them god-intoxicated, ecstatic. The flute symbolized the Divine call to which the disciples responded, while the drum represented the disciple's ecstasy. In the case of flute, the Lord was the active agent while the egos responded and wanted* to merge in the Divine. In the case of drum the disciple has only the vision or an innate upsurge towards the Supreme Reality to which he makes an effort to mingle. The Situation under Visakha represented by the potter's wheel was different: at this stage, the individual got an indistinct Intonation of divine reality. He was aware of the various material sheaths over his consciousness and thereby of his limitations. Under such a Situation he could only surrender to the Divine Spirit hoping that it would shape his life and direct it towards the desired goal. Under Dhanistha, the ego has passed the purificatory process and is preparing to take another Step for his radical psychological orientation.

When Dhanistha ushers the ego to Aquarius, a radically oriented and universalized consciousness begins to function in the individual. He is now prepared to assume greater responsibilities for his inner unfoldment.

AQUARIUS (Kumbha)

(300°00' - 330°00')

When the ego enters Aquarius, it has already become a part of the Occult Hierarchy. The Capricornus impulse completely shatters the personality, makes the individual disenchanted with material gifts, and puts him ultimately in close association with beneficent powers of nature. Entering into Aquarius, the ego has already learnt the secret of the illusory nature of existence and the necessity of completely reversing the involuntary impulses and reflexes in man and establishing control over them. The very name Kumbha which stands for Aquarius though it means in Sanskrit a pitcher has a special connotation in yogic literature: it stands for Suspension of outgoing breath and holding it so as to overcome outgoing involuntary impulses. At Aquarius, the involuntary course of egoic development is taken control of and the ego developing its seer-will begins to merge it in the universal life-essence. At this stage the differentiation of individual ego begins to fade, it becomes a co-worker of Natural forces and attains a Status, which in occult literature is mentioned as that of an Adept.

The development of seer-will and the vision of the final goal now illumine the inner spirit making it irradiate with its divine spark; its flame cannot now be affected by any storm or be extinguished by a deluge. The individual uniqueness begins to dazzle under Aquarius; the individual begins to take Charge of the universal evolutionary streams moving on different Rays expressing seven streams of human and racial development. The vision of one's own uniqueness, the uniqueness of one's own Ray, the special mission destined for each individual and the unity with the cosmic evolutionary impulse make the life of the individual under Aquarius exceptionally unique, and radiant with the all pervading radiance of divine Light, supreme Power, and impersonal Delight. All these are contained in the basic Aquarian impulse, a possibility towards which all experiences under this sign, whether distressing or joyful, incessantly push the ego to move.

One finds indications of these characteristics of the sign described astrologically in indifferent ways. Aquarius operates under the planetary rulership of Saturn, but so does Capricornus. The significant difference between the two lies in the relationship of Jupiter and Mars with Capricornus, while no planet-received its exaltation or debilitation in Aquarius. The Aquarian impulse does not need support from any external impetus; it shines with its own inner radiance. It is completely detached from all external influences, neither physical attachment, nor psychological affectations, nor mental obscurities make any impact on such an individual. He does not react to personal animosities. The integration of various principles of life makes the individual complete who can stand alone, with any thirst for sentient support or without any self-glorification, neither praise nor blame can disturb the psyche and the inner stability of such a person.

The sign is very meaningfully symbolized by a pitcher from which water is flowing out. In this description of Aquarius both water and pitcher should be understood in their inner connotation. Water is a basic element of manifestation, and in almost every religion it is described as the basic life-giving principle. Apas or water has already been discussed in relation with Purva Ashada. Here it will suffice to indicate that pure water is like the nectar which vitalises, preserves and purifies the inner being and makes him fit enough to establish close relationship with higher manifestative powers. As far as pitcher is concerned, it was mentioned in relation with Visakha and it was mentioned that the pitcher stood for the physical self, the lower quaternary through which the spirit or the higher triad in man worked and performed its various functions at the physical level. During the Aquarius stage, the ego is completely objective about itself, it has ceased to generate any involuntary impulse; the inner being now is aware of the importance of the physical self or of the physical instruments as the means for carrying out the will of the supreme, the lower quaternary comprising physical, astral as well as mental components of the body is merely a means for the expression of the higher being which is a reflection of the all pervading universal life-essence, the one life universal. The ego now understands consciously that the physical being represented as the pitcher is this sign is only a means for discharging the will of the higher power, it has no will of its own, so it operates like a Channel pouring forth the universal life sustaining energy symbolized by water. As the ego at this stage has completely established its control over its involuntary responses and reflexes, it can use the body as an instrument for carrying out the

Divine downpour to various levels of manifestation: the water flowing out of the pitcher represents the divine beneficence which it uses for carrying out the specific mission entrusted to it. At Aquarius, the ego begins to adapt itself according to the will of the God, it servilely copies or follows the Natural Law whereby it is able to express its own uniqueness.

This stage of egoic development has been variously described. In occult literature it is mentioned as the stage when the individual becomes an Adept; he is often described as the Master of the Wisdom. The adept is the rare efflorescence of a generation of enquirers; he has attained the acme of human development and there is nothing beyond him. He has learnt everything possible on this globe; their vision reaches beyond eternity and physical space does not present any limitations for him. The adepts have gained the knowledge of existence by direct means, there is surety and stability in him. Now the fragmented spark has become one with the Flame, so he and his Father are now One. At Aquarius the ego has established unity with the inner ruler immortal and the outer being is merely a reflection of the inner. He now obeys the inward impulse which transcends knowledge, mentation, and physical perception. He has nothing to gain for himself but he operates to carry the work of his Father and as such he has no rest. His foremost task is to push forward the evolutionary impulse for the world, he has to work to salvage the orphan humanity. Every human being contains within himself vast potentialities and he has to assist each individual to un-cover his or her own greatness, his uniqueness as the Master himself has done. He has to exhume the primeval strata of human being, his basic nature and to lay bare the wonderful complications of his inner self so that he could once more regain his own pristine innocence and delight. This is the great responsibility for the ego at Aquarius and this mission is symbolized by the water flowing out of the pitcher. The man at this stage does not work for himself but for his Father and for His work.

A unique feature of the Masters of the Wisdom is that they are unique by themselves; they do not conform to any specific mould. Each of them reflects the acme of the Ray on which they continue their work, they take care of the humanity and the races progressing on their Ray. As they themselves have reached the acme of their own development, they do not set themselves as the archetype for others flowing on their stream, but they mirror to them their own uniqueness on their own Channel of growth. It is this feature which is reflected even in predictive astrology which shows that every Aquarian is unique in his own way. When the Aquarian flow descends upon an individual he becomes, great, overwhelmed by the torrents of the mighty evolutionary force but it leads him towards his own special contribution to the multi-coloured borne of universal harmony and beauty. The impulse makes the human consciousness penetrate deep into the mysteries of life. The politicians, nationalists and the patriots, scientific investigators, religious mystics, adventurer and administrators, great intellectuals and occults all can be found among this group of persons.

Even within the same group of persons no two persons would unfold their life in an identical manner: a rose and a Jasmine are not similar yet each perfect rose flower is a unique manifestation by itself and so is a perfect Jasmine. It is this perfection which is produced by the Aquarian impulse, and every Master of the Wisdom unfolding himself at this stage expressing his own perfection operates to bring out the special perfection, uniqueness of every form of manifestation.

Aquarius operates under the Vedic deity Indra. We have already discussed the role of Indra in connection with Visakha where Indra and Agni together presided over the asterism, and with Jyestha where Indra was concerned with asterism individually. The characteristics of Indra were examined there in relation with the Tamasic impulsion where the egos were struggling to extricate themselves from material encasements. At Aquarius, Indra's another aspect becomes prominent. Indra is said to be the ruler of the heaven world where he rules over the various gods and other celestial beings. All of them enjoy the fruits of their good karma; at Aquarius also the egos arrive only after considerable maturity and at the threshold of their perfection. Indra also strives to maintain the natural harmony of the universe by thwarting away the imbalance created by Asuric, non-godly or demonic, forces. The sufferings experienced during the sway of Aquarius sign, which are quite common to find in predictive astrology, are expressions of these Asuric propensities, which require to be counterbalanced at this stage which often makes the suffering very acute. In continuation of the same responsibility, Indra has a special role to officiate for the luminaries, the Sun and the Moon, when they are afflicted by Rahu. When any emergency arises and the critical balance of the universe is in jeopardy, Indra intervenes to take Charge of the Situation and endeavours to stabilize the natural balance by lending his strength to different elements in difficulty (or in deficiency). In short, Indra is ever ready to take charge of the harmonious Operation of creative energies in Nature, which in fact is the task in which the Adepts on

different Rays are constantly engaged. Indra in relation with Aquarius does not only work on the luminous mind and inspire the ego with insight and retrieval of the Truth but he makes it contribute its supramental forces for the welfare of mankind in line with the Divine Plan.

The third quarter of Dhanistha so much changes the consciousness of the individual that he is completely attuned with the Supreme Musician and by the time the ego crosses third quarter of Purva Bhadrpada and enters Pisces, it has once more become a part of the cosmic energy itself.

DHANISTHA (Contd.)

(300°00'-306°40')

The last two quarters of Dhanistha are ruled by Venus and Mars which are not very harmonious with the sign lord Saturn. It puts the individual under difficult conditions. The inner aspirations and the external circumstances specially resulting from past karmic forces are opposed to each other producing mental tension. In actual life the conflict between these streams of impulses expresses itself by the psychological attraction towards philanthropy and piety, which are often tainted by the desire for sensuous gratification lurking at the root of their noble feelings. In case these contradictions are not resolved and the urge for sensuous satisfaction is not controlled and transcended, the individual shows much resentment and is under the spell or bout of serious anger. Towards the end of Dhanistha, during its last quarter, Mars arouses devotion, moral strength and helpfulness.

The second half of Dhanistha which lies within the Aquarius sign leads the aspirant to a State of extreme degree of religious passion, verging on fanaticism, which requires the most delicate handling. The upsurge of spirituality accompanied by philanthropy and complete lack of self-centredness and self-seeking results are needed for the successful unfoldments of inner potentialities as this stage otherwise it becomes difficult to protect oneself from the onslaughts of Darker Forces. Stability and balance at this stage are possible only with special solar benediction, which implies complete dedication to ideals and idealistic way of life. If there is any impediment to the absorption of universal spiritual forces, the individual can easily succumb to base instincts. Absolute faith in God, the Supreme Authority, and the purity of emotions, which implies purification of various material sheaths, are essential for the protection of neophyte at this stage. Only such preparations could save him from bewilderment and insanity which otherwise could befall upon him. The dangers at the latter half of Dhanistha are great which explain much wreckage strewn on the path of self-unfoldment at this stage. Journey beyond Dhanistha required absolute purity of heart otherwise the individual would be torn between different kinds of conflicts and psychological turbulence. The life of an individual under the impact of Dhanistha during its latter part is always enigmatic creating a big chasm in his inner and outer life: this Situation is true in the cases of both who are earnestly trying to spiritualize and purify their life and continuously unfolding different levels of their inner possibilities as well as in others who are unable even now to transcend their materiality.

SATBHISAK

(306°40'-320°00')

Dhanistha produced god-intoxication, realization of divine bliss and the irresistible urge to unite with the Infinitude. But self-realization is different from god-intoxication. It requires complete eradication of mayavic illusion, avidya and unification with one's inner core blended with the universal energy pervading throughout the manifestation. The inner glow, the effulgence of one's soul, can shine forth when the darker influences surrounding the various layers of the individual are dispelled. Satbhisak does this. The thousand stars or the limitless scintilla symbolising this asterism represented the evolving beings who are seized with the inner upsurge and have aroused their seer-will to unify the outer and the inner self and then to merge that integrated wholeness of the personality with universal consciousness. The innumerable hurdles appearing in this task are well revealed by the various characteristics of the asterism which described the psycho-spiritual tests and trials presented to the aspirant before he ascends to the higher levels of the evolutionary ladder.

The core impulse of Aquarius is channeled through Satbhisak which occupied 306°40' - 320°00' of the sign which enabled it to act forcefully to expose the spiritual purification and illumination that Aquarius wanted for the ego. The thousand or the limitless stars signifying the Channels through which the Satbhisak impulse descended upon the individuals indicated that the fulfillment of the individuals in

every case depended upon the expression of their special uniqueness. But this can happen when the veil over their radiance is removed. Each planet will have to act at this stage concentratedly to dispel the materiality and to purify the nature of each sheath with which the specific planet is connected. When the five non-luminaries have completed their task, then and then only the Atmic consciousness reflecting the solar will or the will of the Supreme, can descend to the lowest physical level and vibrate the individual harmoniously with the universal consciousness. As these planets have to impart their impact unreservedly, they enjoy special strength when they occupy the second and the third quarter of Satbhisak (310°00' - 316°40') where they enjoyed the Vargottam position. This stellar beneficence enabled the individual to derive the most auspicious gifts from the planets occupying this region and thereby acquire various faculties to resound the different notes of the cosmic music.

Satbhisak is a powerful impulse determined to produce its assigned result. The astrological texts classified the asterism as horse by species and butcher by temperament. The attributes implied the invincible, perseverant and impersonal nature of the asterism in pursuing its goal. The objective being the realization of one's pristine nature, Satbhisak is determined to penetrate to the inner core of the individual and expose the shining star buried deep within him; for accomplishing this mission, it is unconcerned about the consequential hardships and sufferings that may arise in the process. The realization of the Immensity within oneself sometimes imparts a sense of fulfillment, greatness inherent in each individual but the illusory self identifying itself with it is often deluded and becomes vain and egotist. Denial of the impersonal nature of the spring of the inner illumination or the oblivion of the source of the powerful descent of energy overtaking Him is counterproductive. There ensues much excruciating pain in order to resolve this contradiction. It can be borne only by strong determination to withstand the astral-scalp used in the Operation. The inner vitality to bear the trouble and the unemotional courage to dissolve the materiality both are contributed by Satbhisak itself. The characterization by horse and butcher implies this aspect of the asterism. The horse represents the animal possessing physical strength and capacity to bear enormous hardships under difficult and stressful situations; a butcher is never moved by the righteousness or otherwise of his deeds, he pursues his goal unconcerned with the ethicality of his task. The combined effect of these two features implied ruthless destruction of mental blocks and psychological obscurities in which process deep frustration and sorrow might result as a consequence of the dispelling of vanity of the self and the destruction of egotism which are inevitable in the process. When the vanity of egotism is perceived and the true source of inner upsurge and spiritual illumination is recognized, the psycho-spiritual trials of the individual have achieved their objective. They prepared the ego to stand before the portals of Divine Wisdom and knock at its door seeking permission to enter. But before the candidate is permitted inside the archaic Mysteries, he is tested and examined thoroughly before his presentation for Initiation and the descent of secret inner ruler immortal or the conscious control by the indwelling spirit. Initiation in Secret Mysteries is a mystic experience, which takes place inside the being, but it completely illumines his nature whose joy and contentment transcend all the sufferings and deprivations experienced in the process.

It is the responsibility of Rahu, the planetary ruler of Satbhisak to find out the readiness of the candidate, to sweep every nook and corner of the past karmic accumulation and to burn the dross before the new dawn of the Immensity of Consciousness, a kind of new birth, is granted to the candidate. Rahu's task is to dissolve almost completely the past karmic accumulations. It is an essential requirement for the realization of one's true, pristine nature. It is for this final ascension to the height of one's glory, the merging of one's flaming scintilla in the Eternal Flame, that the Sattwic impulses had been trying. Only after the limitations of materiality at different levels of personality are removed that the flame of the individual spark begins to glow and the individual is declared prepared for the Initiation but this final struggle for unveiling the individual uniqueness is severe and heart wrenching.

The preparation involves resolution of many psychological knots and release from turmoil and stress created by intellectual isolation and duality of mind. The equipoise is attained when every nook and corner of the inner-man is intensely searched, weaknesses exposed and expunged, and mental obscurities dissolved. These Operations are accomplished by the rulership of Rahu over the asterism whose primary function is to expose the karmic Sediments, dissolve them and to transform the pain into one's insight into the inner working of the world. The various hardships produced under Rahu's Operations are aimed at this transformation.

Rahu's rulership over Satbhisak aims at unveiling the real or the inner nature of the man. At the initial stage, the various obscurities covering the pristine nature or the spiritual scintilla are exposed; the outer

sheaths generally comprise the feelings of anger, suspicion, doubts and the sense of separateness. Animal passion, greed, delusion, envy, and jealousy are some of the common traits of human astral nature, which lie immediately under the physical sheath, and their intensity of attachment is severe enough to persist till the last ordeal. In the process of transcending the limitations of one's personality, it is necessary to give up one's personal and prudential considerations of advantages and conveniences and to blend one's centre of consciousness with the Universal Self. The transference of the centre of one's experiences from the personal self to the consideration for others can lead to complete dissolution of one's personality. All negative feelings and self-centred approach to one's interactions with others are impediments to deeper (esoteric) teachings. Rahu aims at instilling this kind of new awareness without any nucleus of the personal self, which could enable the individual to perceive the world and relationships from the universal Standpoint. Rahu opens the eyes to new realities of life but it can be achieved only when the individual learns not to be deceived by (false) appearances. This is a difficult qualification but in this onerous responsibility which completely upsets the personal life of the individual, Rahu is assisted by Saturn which rules over Aquarius in which sign Satbhisak operates.

Saturn assists in the process by dissolving psychological obscurities, eliminating personal negative feelings and material attractions, and by desensitizing emotional feelings of attractions and repulsions, and in their place by filling the life of the individual with occasional flashes and insights into one's pristine nature with enormous power at his command. Under its impulsion, the individual is reoriented to work for Philanthropic and humanitarian objectives. In such inner urges, the actual involvement of the individual often remains on the subjective plane: the desire to be helpful to the society, to work for humanitarian causes and the profession of cosmopolitan ideals are meaningless expressions unless various contrariety in such (may be unconscious) motivations and professions are exposed and worked out. The exposure of such contradictions in one's behaviour often described as hypocrisy is done by Rahu and Saturn. Having exposed the contradictions, the stellar impulses induce the individuals to grapple with them, struggle, fight, suffer and finally resolve the contrariety in character. When the struggle between the inner and the outer urges is over and the individual has decided to be on the side of the inner. Satbhisak comes to the fore and leads him to the realization of his uniqueness, to let the individual star shine forth.

Rahu, the planetary ruler of Satbhisak, is an excellent teacher of esoteric wisdom which could make the individual an intelligent beneficent power. The task is difficult but Rahu does it admirably well. He successfully extricates the deeply entrenched weaknesses of the candidate to burn them for all times. This feature of Rahu has qualified it to play significant role in mystic Initiatory rites. H.P. Blavatsky referred to this aspect of Rahu when she described the significance of the churning of the ocean to retrieve nectar from the Great Depth. Rahu's vengeance during eclipses on Sun and Moon, the luminaries of the planetary system because they revealed his (real) identity when it surreptitiously managed to partake a part of it and became immortal, according to her was a garbled Version of the Mysteries of the Sun's Initiation. "Rahu, the Dragon's head, played a prominent part in the Mysteries of Sun's (Vikartan's) Initiation, when the candidate and the dragon has a Supreme fight", she stated¹. This role of Rahu is played in everyone's Initiatory rites; no one can escape the great trials inflicted by the Dragon in the course of his aspiration towards self-unfoldment. Even Lord Buddha had to meet the challenges of Mara's temptations and face extremely powerful adversaries. Such inevitable ordeals prior to one's self-realization are important for shedding away the past karmic Sediments and any lingering emotional or mental weakness. Rahu being a Daitya, a demon, and Satbhisak also characterised as a butcher, both among themselves along with the general impetus of Saturn, the ruler of the sign in which they operate, generate so much of invincible purificatory impulse that even gods cannot undo the same; the gods themselves are helpless in retrieving the nectar without the active Cooperation of Rahu. Rahu's impact on Truth-realization is certainly disturbing but it is inevitable in the mission of extricating it from the inner core of the individual and bringing to the outer surface of his consciousness. The entire process however, creates much turbulence which explains the whole exercise undertaken at this stage as much dreaded and misunderstood.

As Satbhisak prepares the individual for the vast expansion of consciousness in various directions, Rahu, the Serpent God of Wisdom, the Nagas, and the dweller of the Patala Loka, the realm of the sub-conscious, has a very extraordinary role to play. Rahu is the special custodian of secret knowledge and wisdom; it is the responsibility of

(I) *The Secret Doctrine*, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 380

Rahu to protect this knowledge from its falling into the unwary hands. It is also Rahu's Charge to make the individual ready and qualified for its receipt. In discharge of this trust, Rahu has to cleanse the

physical and psychological impurities and negative feelings and aspirations before the revelation of the deeper secrets of Nature. The process by which astral purification is made is arduous and painful full of sorrow, disappointment and frustration. Its apparent impact is troublesome, painful, full of anguish and full of uncertainties. But after the storm is over and dissolution of karmic attachments along with removal of self-centredness of the individual is completed, he is readied for the descent of Superconscious. The entire Operation is so mixed up and not following any beaten track so as to uncover the individual's uniqueness, that any predictability of Rahu's impact at this stage of egoic evolution is difficult. The entire life-style of the candidate, under Satbhisak impulse is boulders completely. Only when the land is well pulverized that the seeds sprout in abundance. The Satbhisak impact so much churns the psyche of the individual that the nectar lying deep down at the innermost level of his being is exposed and the shining star of the Inner Man begins to sparkle. At this stage, the vision of immortality flashes to the individual, his permanent nature is realized and he gets the perception of the delight arising from altruism and operating as an active cooperator of the beneficent powers of Nature. As Rahu has the secret of Divine Plan with it, the impulse generated under its planetary rulership strengthens this urge of Cooperation. Rahu is a descendant of Kashyapa Prajapati who was born to assist Lord Brahma in his manifestative mission, Rahu actively carries further the mission assigned to Kashyapa. As this trust is Sattwic in nature, the Rahu's impact despite the unsettling and stormy influences creates in the individual's life equipoise and harmonize s him with the Divine Plan of evolution but its method of Operation is very much like that of Nritti, the demonic regent of Moolam, the 19th asterism which destroyed the external superimpositions over one's real self so as to put him on the path of retrieval of the heavenly nectar, the knowledge of one's real nature. Under Satbhisak, Rahu activated and exposed the discordant notes hidden under self-centred motivations and remorselessly exterminated them. Having implemented this task of purging the impurities and negative feelings, Rahu under Aquarius operating with Satbhisak asterism bestows unexpected and extraordinary gifts, Status, its pilgrimage is a sea-farer who during the course of his Manavantaric voyage has now reached the Satbhisak stage and is knocking at the door of self-realization. But much more detailed description of Varuna is given through his fight with Vritra, the demon with immense power for creating Mayavic illusion against which the candidates for Initiatory rites have to fight towards the end of their journey and before they are permitted entry into the Hall of Initiation.

Varuna's regency on Satbhisak clarifies many salient features of the last hitch struggle of the candidate. Sri Aurobindo described Varuna rolling back by his wide being and ample vision the limitations surrounding the individuals and revealing to them what the dark Vritra's Obsession had withheld and obscured. Varuna is the form of spiritual image of an all embracing and illuminating infinity. The main root of the word Varuna is 'Vri' meaning 'to cover', 'to embrace', 'to enfold'; the word also signifies 'to sorrow', 'to pervade' which suggest two primary aspects of Varuna namely to cause sorrow and to provide the wisdom base of the pilgrim's struggle. The Vedic Seers attributed mighty sweep of Infinitude to Varuna. In Puranic stories, he is described as a sun, a vasu. But he is also considered as the one who has opened out the boundless paths for the Sun and has hollowed out Channels for the rivers by his command. These are obvious references to his regulation and guidance for the desired evolutionary impulse for each individual on whatever stream of evolutionary Channel he is progressing.

Varuna as a Puranic deity is an Aditya, a Sun, born of Aditi (= endless) who was one of the wives of Kashyapa Prajapati (a creative agent of Lord Brahma). Aditi in Vedic terminology was the cosmic generatrix who represented the 'bounded Infinity', a mind-boggling metaphysical concept. Varuna born as an Aditya from this cosmic Aditi participated mystically in the manifestative process. His special contribution had been the limitless expansion and extension of consciousness; under his impact one fathoms the innermost level of one's being and begins to comprehend the infinitude of the cosmic matrix (and in this process one also receives the most important setback of his psychological life). This realm of incomprehensible nothingness, which surrounded Aditi's 'bounded infinity', was envisioned by the Vedic seers as Varuna, 'he who embraced the all pervading indistinguishable intense darkness' within himself from which by his supreme penance, *Tapas*, he made the manifestation possible. This intensity of penance was born of the wisdom which united together all that is, that was and that will be. This wisdom transcended time, Space and creation, yet it is this wisdom in which all these take place. Varuna as this vastness was conceived is of the very nature of wisdom. It was the supreme creative energy of wisdom for which Sage Vashistha, supposedly an offspring of Varuna, hymned in the Rig Veda: "I speak unto myself, when shall I be once more united with Varuna? Will he again accept my offering without displeasure? When shall I, consoled at heart, behold him reconciled? He proves

himself to be a knower of the unconscious: 'Even sleep brings on unrighteousness'¹. Vastness was of the very nature of wisdom, but as we have mentioned earlier, Varuna has another role of dispelling darkness in which process one has to suffer his noose. Varuna is said to be the dispenser of both Light and Darkness - when displeased with men, he turned his face from them and it was Night. This was symbolically expressed by the phrase 'Varuna binds the sinner with his fetters'. The role of spreading darkness and enveloping every form of manifestation is granted to Vritra who is the very antithesis of Varuna and whom Varuna destroys before the effulgence of wisdom casts its impact on manifestation.

The task of rolling back the limitations created by Vritra and dispelling the limitations of illusory senses is extremely difficult. It needs much religious merit and Tapas. That is one of the reasons for the immense hardships borne under Satbhisak. The fight between Varuna and Vritra occurs in everyday life. It causes strife and struggles, pain and sorrow. These are usually attributed as the result of Saturn and Rahu linked with Satbhisak. But the fact is that Varuna and Vritra cannot coexist. And Truth cannot be possessed without the wideness in our consciousness and expansion in our being. In narrowness and division, Truth cannot be caught and escape from all limitations, all angularities, and all separateness. Only after such a wideness and expansion of Truth-Consciousness can one learn about one's real self. With this knowledge of his real-self without any sense of separateness, he learns to comprehend and contain all within himself, all without any limit. He has to grow in the wideness of Varuna, worship him and be as wide as he is. He has to inevitably escape from all kinds of narrowness and delusion.

(1) *The Revelation in the Wilderness*, op. cit p. 83

In everyday life, Satbhisak impulse reflects itself in many different and contradictory ways. If the ego has not matured enough to develop its spirituality and face the sufferings, the vastness of Varuna and creativity of life-energy instead of producing wisdom and depth of understanding give way to Vritra and Satbhisak shows its not-so-glorious picture. It produces narrowness, limitations and prejudices; there is a tendency to be parochial minded, dogmatic and always trying to rationalize one's egoistic behaviour. There is often two streams of motivations trying to supersede each other. The life of an individual engulfed in the fight between Varuna and Vritra when both of them are equally powerful, is highly destabilizing. During this phase of egoic development, the impulse from Indra, the presiding deity of Aquarius in the form of Indra's lightning penetrating dark clouds created by Vritra often appears to the individual as an insight, divine intuition or the illumination of the mind which shows him the way out. Satbhisak produces the greatest occultists who contain within them the highest wisdom and other virtues of Varuna as well as the knowledge and significance of the strife and struggles between the two opposing forces representing Varuna and Vritra. Satbhisak assures them that perseverance in one's mission could ultimately guide him to final victory and attainment of the final glory which is the oneness with the One Life Universal.

Varuna is said to lead to 'retributive violence'. The conflict between Varuna and Vritra very well describes the movement and interplay of forces taking place at the physical and the inner levels of one's being. At the end of Satbhisak impulsion, when the Function of Varuna is over, Rahu has completed the churning Operation and the role of Saturn as the ruler of its second and third quarters has concluded its task and Truth-Consciousness has dawned upon the individual, he longs to mingle in the mainstream of divine outpouring which commences with the last quarter of Satbhisak and takes the aspirant to Purva Bhadrapada. Jupiter rules over the fourth quarter of Satbhisak which gradually ushers the ego to the next asterism which is also ruled over by it. Jupiter begins by generating its special influence in Aquarius itself which is ruled by Saturn and where lie three quarters of Purva Bhadrapada under the guidance of Ajaikapada, one of the most mysterious Vedic deity. Under this asterism, the process of psychological orientation is complete and the ego is qualified to mingle in the cosmic unity.

PURVA BHADRAPADA

(320°00' - 333°20')

The new realization of Truth-Consciousness after the destruction of false formation provided by the Lord of Evil, Vritra, exposes the individual to the abundance of creative luxuriance. But the possibility of getting swept away in the exuberance of divine delight or in the event of attacks from the lurking foes of darkness of vain-glory of megalomania could hurl him down from the Olympian heights. The next phase of egoic development takes the individual to one-pointed devotion to the divine creative mission transcending every personal consideration and (almost) to complete avoidance of every trace

of materiality tainting his psyche. Such a difficult task of psychological orientation is executed under Purva Bhadrapada.

The Vedas denoted both Purva and Uttara Bhadrapadas under the common name *Prostyapadas* which is a Compound word consisting of two words Prostya and Padas. The latter means the feet, and it implies anything like a bench, a stool, a pillar, or a base which Supports, while the former refers to a bull, a fish and it could even suggest fully grown, mighty and strong. These are very suggestive words revealing the basic features of the two Bhadrapadas. These two asterisms operate as strong, auspicious base for the last phase of the egoic development. The Vedas considered the bull and the fish as reservoirs of Sattwic creative potentials. Bull as a vehicle, *vahana*, of Lord Mahadeva appeared even as a symbol of Taurus, the second zodiacal sign representing the creative potential. Fish is related with the twelfth zodiacal sign, which contained within its bosom the limitless scintillas of creative possibilities, it is a Container of innumerable fertilising egg-cells which like a lotus bud could produce from within itself limitless egg-cells. Even a bull has similar connotation. It is different from a horse. Although both of these quadrupeds represent power and animal strength and both of them are frequently mentioned in the Vedas in various contexts, a bull represented a leader of men, or a divine agent engaged in procreative mission. The names Purva and Uttara Bhadrapadas relate the two asterisms with the month of Bhadra. During this period the land receives rains in provision. Purva refers to the earlier phase of the month while Uttara is related with its later phase.

Under the Monsoon when the land is wet and the atmosphere moist (see Ardra, the sixth asterism under which impulse the emerging egos received fresh impetus of the life-energy), there is luxuriant growth all over the land. The two asterisms under Prostyapadas represent the beginning of a new upsurge of creative activities. But as the individual is no longer concerned with his own personal development in view of the vast expansion of his consciousness under Satbhisak, the new dawn of creativity under Purva Bhadrapada is of a special nature. It prepared the ego for its final union with the universal consciousness and the accomplishment of its final destiny. The various stellar impulses associated with this asterism support this mission of the asterism.

Jupiter as the planetary ruler of Purva Bhadrapada and Mars, Venus and Mercury related with its first three quarters are much concerned with evolutionary impetus. The last quarter of Purva Bhadrapada under the planetary control of Moon extends into Pisces which is ruled by Jupiter, vibrates harmoniously with the zodiacal sign in which it operates, it results in support for the upliftment of the expanding consciousness leading to the ascent of the conscient to the Super-conscient and merging with it. Purva Bhadrapada exerts its energy in strengthening and preparing the creative urges aroused-under it to harmoniously blend with the latter impulse under Uttar Bhadrapada.

Purva Bhadrapada marks a highly propitious stage on the path of the soul's growth. It occurs after accomplishments of many siddhis, considerable expansion of one's consciousness and insight into Truth-Realization. When such an individual craves for divine unfoldment, attention of Higher Beings is attracted which itself is of immense significance. Adi Guru Sankaracharya spoke of that Situation as one of the greatest blessings of human birth. The protection by Great Ones *Maha Purusha Ashrya*, the Protective guidance by the Divine Beings is one of the three rare gifts, the other two being Human-ness (*Manusya-twarri*), and aspiration towards Liberation (*Mumukshatvam*). The Divine Guidance comes on the fulfillment of the other two rare gifts to human individuals. The protective guidance is accorded to prepare the aspirant to stand on his own; it prepares him to stand on his own feet without any outside reliance. It marks the stage when his trials are over and he has qualified for further bestowal of wisdom, power and spiritual delight. For such benedictions, the Vedic deity is invoked.

Ajaikapada who presides over this asterism is invoked for safety protection and extinction of worldly affliction. The two hymns in the Atharva Veda related him with a psychological State in the evolutionary journey of the neophyte. He has the power with his wisdom and other powerful impulses to extricate one from the various cobwebs of human relationships and from the thirst for material experiences. The release of such indwelling possibilities could be highly dangerous if adequate precautionary preparations are not accomplished and the energy- source is not properly harnessed. The various forces at the command of Ajaikapada have much destructive possibilities if possessed by the unwary, specially for the evolutionary unfoldment, so the nature and possibilities under Ajaikapada are very cautiously mentioned in scriptures. Only those who were highly spiritual in their inner nature are brought in closer relationship with this deity.

The Puranic stories related with the creative programme of Daksh Prajapati mention that he got two of his sixty daughters married to Bhuta (= one of the five elements viz., Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether or Akasha) who from one of his wives namely Sarupa (= one who has similar likeness) begot Ajaikapada, Ahirbudhanya and several other mighty beings; from his other wife he had several powerful Rudras. The story given in Vishnu Purana emphasised certain special characteristics of Ajaikapada. In this story, Daksha Prajapati got ten of his daughters married to Dharma (= Righteousness). One of them produced several shining deities of whom was a Vasu (= sun, or a ray of light) named Prabhas (= splendour, lustre). He married Jupiter's sister named Varastri (= precious woman) and the couple gave birth to Vishwakarma, the heavenly architect who fathered Ajaikapada, Ahirbudhanya, Tvastri and several Rudras. The Padma Purana made Ajaikapada and Ahirbudhanya offsprings of Surabhi (= cow, a spirituous liquor) who became one of the wives of Kashyapa Rishi.

Similar stories are found in other scriptures but essentially all of them suggest that the presiding deities of Purva and Uttara Bhadrapada namely Ajaikapada and Ahirbudhanya respectively, were two aspects of the same creative and guardian deities belonging to the Rudras category engaged in protecting and fostering the evolutionary process. Both of these deities assume much importance after Varuna has released the human consciousness tethered to material involvements and at a stage when the individual has taken decisive steps towards retracing his original source and retrieving his pristine innocence. This is a difficult stage in human progress especially when the individual stands on a difficult mountain peak with much enhanced danger of his precipitous fall. At this stage he needs guidance and protection of an experienced Great One.

The taking over of the task of preparing and guiding the aspirant at this stage for his final assault towards his goal by Ajaikapada is an onerous responsibility to be assumed only after the completion of the candidate's purificatory exercises. This mystic deity has a task veiled with much mystic allusions. Dr. Mess described Ajaikapada as "one of the aspects of Deity of the 'Womb' stage of the Path". Students of mystic revelations pass through several stages of latency of intense arduous preparations. Success in these exercises depends upon Jovian activity tempered by Saturnian restraint. Only when the last quarter of Purva Bhadrapada enters into Pisces that the harmonious blending of Jupiterian influence with Moon, the ruler of the fourth quarter of Purva Bhadrapada enables the ego to succeed in the last phase of its journey. During the period of 'spiritual incubation', Ajaikapada takes charge of the individual.

The importance of Ajaikapada can be deciphered from his very name which comprises of three parts namely Aja-Eka-Pada which taken together means "one-footed unborn goat or ram". Aja, as we have seen in relation with the first zodiacal sign, Aries, means the unborn and refers to Brahma, the Cosmic Creator. The presiding deity of Purva Bhadrapada is intensely engaged in creativity and in preparing the egos for their ensuing manifestative task. Eka means one alone, not accompanied by any one else, matchless, supreme. It therefore implies that the duality, the very essence of manifestative principle, has ceased at this stage and the ego is shorn of superfluous adorations of materiality which resulted when Satbhisak exposed the ego to the vastness of its primeval nature; under Purva Bhadrapada, the duality has ended integrating both the Spirit and Matter together making the individual impervious to Rajasic as well as Tamasic impulses. The unity produced under Purva Bhadrapada makes the individual secure within himself. The word Eka as a qualificatory adjective to the word 'pada' makes

(I) *The Revelation in the Wilderness*, op. cit., Vol. III, 78

the meaning of the word Ekapada extraordinarily important. Pada means 'the foot' either of men or animals, it also means 'a ray of light'. The deity called Ajaikapada refers to 'the unborn single footed (animal or man) irradiating a single ray of light'. The Vedic literature described the nature of living entities by the number of their feet: human beings were considered bi-ped, animals were quadrupeds, Spiders six-footed, and the reptiles were hundred (or many, thousand) footed insects. The reference to 'one footed' beings is absent because he who stands alone without any support is a spiritual spark without any trace of materiality in him. He shines by his own light. He is a ray of consciousness having been purified of all his ignorance (avidya - un-wisdom) and obscurities. One footed beings are divine, united in consciousness of the Supreme, the all-pervading Light. According to Puranic stories, Narada advised Dhruva to leave his royal household, go to deep forests and do penance standing on one leg.

On successful completion of his austerities, Dhruva received back his birth-right which was denied during his childhood which had made him sad. After he did penance standing on one foot for thousands of years as indicated by Narada, he did not only regain his birthright to divine inheritance and ruled for

many many years, but also became the Pole Star with the divine responsibility for maintaining the stability of the earth and watching and guiding its evolution according to the Divine Plan. Such is the result of one-footed penance. It represents one-pointedness, concentration on the Ultimate Reality, power and equipoise of seer-will, and complete confidence in one's own self. It also referred to the bestowal of responsibility for maintaining creation. Purva Bhadrpada imparts self-reliant nature with immense creative responsibilities.

Ajaikapada oversees the Operation of Jupiter as the planetary ruler of Purva Bhadrpada and the rulership of Mars, Venus and Mercury over its first three quarters. These impulses support the expansion of subjectivity of men, the growth and expansion of his inner, consciousness. The inner awareness begins to unfold at this stage very rapidly. The inner explosion irradiating the whole nature of the individual with divine effulgence is arrested and contained only by the Satumian control resulting from its rulership over Aquarius wherein it occurs. Within the limitations produced by physical conditions, the highly surcharged creativity induced by these impulses becomes evident. Purva Bhadrpada represents the culmination as well as termination of the trials of the neophyte which began at the very outset of the Sattwic impulses when he came under the influence of Moolam. Under Ajaikapada, the individual is also madf an active agent among the Nature's beneficent powers. While granting this special privilege of Cooperation with Nature, Ajaikapada also safeguards the individual from any possible onslaught generally made to occult aspirants delving in mysteries of Nature and of the Self . Any lapse at this height is likely to produce severe wreckage. One often hears of falls of the Angels which take place even after considerable progress has been made on the Path if proper safeguards are not made. Such Protections are necessary before the final door of the Temple of Wisdom is opened and the individual has attained his divine Status. At that stage the drop mingles with the ocean.

The Rudras have very special role to play at this stage. After realization of the 'Bounded Infinity' and 'the Immensity of Void', the primeval nature of the individual is ready to receive the descent of the Superconscient. He is eagerly expecting now the fulfillment of his long cherished destiny but he does not know the nature of the expected dawn. The fullness of Void exposed its rich gifts of subjective activities with celestial happiness, but in this realm any seed of materiality increases manifold and the result in calamitous. All seeds of such entanglements have to be dissolved prior to the egoic entry into the realm of its spiritual unfoldment and self realization. The Rudras at Prostypadas and personifications of such destructive power who would not permit the minutest trace of astro-mental dirt of the past to cross this boundary keep a watch at this stage. Ajaikapada oversees the progress under Purva Bhadrpada so that the impersonal creative forces blossomed henceforth effortlessly whilst any material seed remaining in the innermost corner of the heart is completely destroyed. Ajaikapada was born as a creative power, but as a product of phenomenal elements, Bhuta, he could not let the past memories, proelivities and achievements vanish without any resistance: the struggle between two made the life under Purva Bhadrpada very trying and bereft of every personal happiness.

When Purva Bhadrpada enters the realm of Pisces with its fourth quarter, it has already succeeded to a great extent in attaining the Seer-Will. Moon is the ruler of the fourth quarter of the asterism, and it is able now to reflect the Divine Plan (Sun) very eminently. At this stage, the consciousness of the candidate is so purified and prepared to blend the same in the universal one that he has no personal life, he has neither personal sorrows nor personal happiness. He is now a part of the heavenly hosts working for the good of the mankind. He has now become a part of the Divine Plan. With this realization, the individual enters the zone of Pisces and becomes a part of it. The ego leaves Aquarius as an Adept and enters Pisces as a slave to his duty and a part of the Eternal Motion.

PISCES (Meenam)

(330°00'-360°00')

The egoic entry into Pisces, the twelfth sign of the zodiac extending from 330° 00' to 360° 00' marked the journey's end. It is however, a prelude to a new beginning. The interregnum between the two phases produced many important changes. The last sign of the zodiac is a cauldron which radically altered the nature and consciousness of the ego. The three asterisms namely, the Purva and Uttara Bhadrpadas, and Revati were actively engaged in this process. The importance of Purva Bhadrpada is exceedingly great because it guided the highly evolved entity from the last phase of Aquarius towards its Manavantaric rest.

Pisces is symbolized by two fishes. Jupiter rules over it. Venus is exalted in this sign and Mercury is in its debilitation. The regency of the sign is entrusted to the Vedic deity Agni. These characterisations of the sign describe the State of consciousness of the various egos passing through it and the nature of influences flowing through it.

The two fishes clinging to each other's tail express the balance between two polarised force radiations. The Manvantaric cycle began with Polarisation of the Unity existing in the earlier phase when the Great Breath had not swept over the slumbering Germs and the thrill of sentience was not yet produced. The impulse aroused at the beginning of manifestation now ebbs out. At Pisces, the duality in the egoic consciousness is resolved; the urge for immaterialisation is consequently obliterated. The momentum begun at the initial stage of the journey had acquired much force during the various phases of the evolutionary course. The impulses which had been very active so far are now quietened and the Germ is entering into a State of quiescence. Pisces represented the eternal quietude, peace, stability, stillness and the mighty reservoir of all possibilities, potential and the ultimate destiny of the spirit and the essence of all substances which would later on emerge from the subjectivity of the cosmic void to objectivity of the phenomenal existence. The fishes eating the tail of each other symbolized the quietening of agitation which had stirred the Germ to embark upon its evolutionary journey.

The quiescence and absence of all agitation do not imply total negation of all activities. Jupiter as a ruler of the sign provides its special impetus to it. It is the power of growth and expansion, the intelligence motivating and guiding ordered unfoldment of disparate units of consciousness, the protective energy which sustained every individual and inspired him to move towards the attainment of his ultimate destiny. The evolutionary impulse generated under the Jovian direction within the general milieu of quietude and stillness of eternal dormancy produced by the cessation of all agitation, aroused heightened sensitivity capable to respond to the slightest thrill of Sensation. The exaltation of Venus is associated with this latency of responsiveness. Venus possessed the *Mritasanjeevani Mantra*, the power to resurrect the dead: it is under the Venusians impact that the Germ lying in the bosom of the Sea of Immutability responds to the sweep of the next Manvantaric impulse and embarks on its cycle of necessity once again.

Towards the end of the twelfth sign, all materiality of phenomenal existence merges in the cosmic void of perpetual motion (a very abstract metaphysical concept by itself) and as such this is a realm of high degree of abstraction. Mercury is primarily a planet which operates in the realm of materiality. It operates like a bridge, carrying the experiences of phenomenal existence into the realm of abstraction and bringing to brain consciousness intonations of the Spirit world. Whatever its role, it requires objective base to express itself. As this condition is absent under Pisces, the planet is described as debilitated here due to its inability to be effective here. The brain-consciousness or the physical intelligence which produced mental (or thought) power does not find suitable conditions for its Operation at this stage. It is so because the veiling power of physical intelligence, the power of thought, to impose its own design on the objective plane and to produce egotism (ahamkara) and Spiritual ignorance (avidya) does not find any place in the State of abstraction in the eternal motion. This is the realm of pure subjectivity without any thirst for sentience. This debilitates Mercury.

All that which had so far been immersed in objective manifestation now flow back to Source. The drop now mingles in the ocean and the spark unites with the Flame. Such a Situation exists at Pisces. All that emerged earlier, during the beginning of Ashwini impulse, and played their diverse manifestative roles now return with their valued experiences transmuted into wisdom and merging the disparate identities into the universal consciousness. Such a State of light, puissance and delight is epitomized in Indra. The Vedic seers who assigned Pisces to Indra invoked him in glorious terms. They hymned him as follows:

Whose are the horses in all directions; whose the kind; whose the villages; whose all the chariots; who created the sun, the dawn; who is the guide of the waters; He, O men, is Indra....
Who has seven rays who is strong like a bull; who is mighty; who lets the waters of the fast-running rivers for running on; who armed with thunderbolt spreads out the rising clouds in the sky, He, O men, is Indra.... Even the Heaven and the Earth prostrate before Him; Before his strength even the mountains are afraid; He is the protector of peace; He is all consciousness; He is the

holder of the thunderbolt in his arms; he, O man, is Indra. Such incantations indicate that the regency of Indra assigned by the ancient seers over Pisces was based on their awareness of totality enshrined in Pisces which indeed is a sign for deep understanding in order to get a glimpse of immensity lying dormant in every human being.

Pisces gradually transforms the luminosity of the mind into deeply mystic understanding of the life-process which finally produced Nirvanic conditions. The three asterisms described the details of this transformation. The final destination still remains incomprehensible. Lord Buddha also talked of Nirvanic State as the complete fusion of the individual consciousness with the universal life-essence either with maintenance of disparate existence or with complete assimilation in the totality. Even the yogic literature described the State of Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa Samadhis referring them to similar situations. They basically attempt to describe what actually takes place at the end of the egoic journey. Such minglings of the drop in the Sea or of the scintilla with the Flame occur during the Pisces stage.

Pisces is a repose as well as a beginning. It lays down that the process of self-unfoldment is not a finite task. Every beginning contains within itself its own end, and every end is a prelude to a new beginning. The mystic symbol of the serpent eating its own tail has fathomless implications. The three asterisms comprising the last sign of the zodiac unveils the several stages involved during this superhuman and supra physical phase of egoic unfoldment. The total denial of all traces of materiality and the relapse to universal subjectivity from which the spark is once more revived characterised the nature of the twelfth sign of the zodiac.

PURVA BHADRAPADA (Contd.)

(330° 00' -333° 20')

The extension of the last quarter of Purva Bhadrapada which is under the immediate control of Moon relates the Adepts with their consciousness fused in the universal creative impulse so as to comprehend the ultimate cosmic order, the harmony and the goal, towards which the Nature is evolving, so as to be effective assistance and support in this process. The egos entering this zone have completely transcended their karmic bondages and are in perfect attunement with the cosmic order. They cannot use the powers they have acquired for their personal advantage any more although they have still to go a long way towards the goal of self-unfoldment. The task of self-awareness is almost over, but the close relationship between the individual ego, the divine spark, and the universal consciousness or the Flame oblige the evolving spirit to understand the cosmic law and be one with it to complete the task of its self-realization. The rulership of Moon over the last quarter of Purva Bhadrapada where Moon operates in a sign under the Jovian rulership shows to the ego the great heights it has yet to scale. Transcendence over karmic bondages does not mark the cessation of all evolutionary efforts. The task of universalisation of consciousness still remains to be accomplished. This call considered as a duty for each evolving divine spark is announced at the conclusion of Purva Bhadrapada; it has to undergo severe austerities and to undertake intense penance to blend its differentiated consciousness in the universal consciousness which leads it to the next phase of Prostyapada, the later half of Bhadrapada asterism. The influence of Jupiter leads to stability, perseverance, determination and encouragement to pursue this course; the ego is now unified with its inner spirit, it is now determined to follow the intonations of its inner self and go by the reflected light of its own intelligence. Such a psychological orientation prepares it for its final trial and the ultimate struggle with the forces of Mara, the delusion of the subtlest kind. Although such struggles are encountered at each stage of evolutionary progress, the final encounter with it is the fiercest of all. The peace and beatitude promised under Pisces descend only as a reward for victory in the last ditch fight with all kinds of mental obscurities and traces of the (past) personality.

UTTARA BHADRAPADA

(333° 20' -346° 40')

Uttara Bhadrapada takes the ego almost to divine height. The necessary preparations for it was however, made under Purva Bhadrapada. At this stage, the evolving entity becomes an Adept and begins to cooperate with Nature's finer forces. It becomes almost a part of Nature. This stage of self-realization is achieved during the second half of 'Prostyapada' (= Uttara Bhadrapada). It Stands as

indicated earlier for 'a bull', 'a kind of fish', or 'a wiseman'. These symbols reveal to some extent the nature and characteristics of this phase of egoic unfoldment.

Uttara Bhadrpadā signifies 'a bull' as well as 'a fish'. It represents the wisdom which produced leaders of men and gods, the creative agents who preserved and upheld Natural Laws and its harmony and power to guide the evolutionary impetus. The asterism as such operates within the Overall influence of Jovian religiosity, but Saturn is specially associated with it as its planetary ruler. Saturn is the god of retribution, arousal of spiritual immanence, release of consciousness from all obscurities. It purifies the egos of all solidity, materiality, and self-centredness. Saturn destroys all forms of duality and differentiation. It bestows deep insight and extensive vision. The combined impulse of Jupiter and Saturn leads to pure intelligence with creativity. The combined effect leads to expansion but without a centre. At this stage, the occult attainments accomplished under Purva Bhadrpadā becomes impersonal and universal. The inner potential begins to impart the main motivating impetus. Without producing any conflict or contradiction, Jupiter preserves and directs the Vital Energy descending upon the evolving entity while Saturn supports the dawn of Divine Immanence; together the impact results into a radical transformation of the egoic consciousness. Under the influence of such an inner change, Uttara Bhadrpadā unifies the individuals with the cosmic movement.

The presiding deity over the Nakshatra is Ahir Budhanya. He is a Vedic deity who was born along with Ajaikapada and other Rudras. He is a kind of Serpent, *Ahi*, but he is a wise serpent. "Ahir-Budhanya" refers to the Nagas who are the very embodiment of spiritual wisdom. Ahir Budhanya is an epithet for Lord Shiva, the Lord of the Yogis, clad with serpents all over his body. Shiva represents the Destroyer almost in the same sense as Saturn is related with death. Both are concerned with identical goals: they arouse the innermost wisdom lying buried within each individual. Shiva is also the creator and the savior of Spiritual Men. He weeds out the human vanity, insanity, inessential nature in man and his trivialities. He destroyed physical passions so as to call to life the perception of eternal life.

Ahir Budhanya is a Rudra. Rudras are not necessarily ferocious and destructive powers as they are commonly described. Shiva Rudras and Vishnu Rudras both are regenerators of spiritual and physical nature. The Kumaras, or the Virgin Ascetics, who refused to create the material beings -the men and women, are also Rudras; they are the Mind-born sons of Brahma. The commonly stated attributes of Rudras are 'howling' and 'terrifying'. They are described so only with regard to undesirable human passions which oppose the evolutionary impetus; they destroy the physical sense-limitations which are ever opposing the development of higher spiritual perception. Rudras are the progeny of Shiva, Saturn and Ahir Budhanya belong to the same class of spiritual powers. They burn the dross to produce pure gold, the release of the efflorescence of the inner spiritual being.

The nature of the spiritual being evolving under Uttara Bhadrpadā is primarily subjective in character. At this stage, the personality hardly survives. These spiritual beings who reach the final stage of the egoic unfoldment are like the Virgin Ascetics who are the embodiments of Divine Principles; they are concerned with generating spiritual impulses from higher levels although they are not directly themselves involved in the process. They are closely connected with the evolutionary cycle of growth and unfoldment of divinity on this earth but they themselves are out of this evolutionary chain. They become the Lords of the Light. Every kind of material stuff needed to create the vehicle of manifested consciousness in the phenomenal world is absent from their nature. They represent the abstract principles of active divine power; they form a part of the Universal Mind which contains within it the abstract and absolute thought of which the concrete personal mind is a shadowy physical aspect. Those egos who became Adepts under Purva Bhadrpadā now become functionaries of the Occult Hierarchy; they are now cooperators of Spiritual Beings through whom the Universal Mind comes into Operation. It is through them that the humanity at large comes into contact with higher spiritual powers. Different Orders of Nature's finer forces work in close unison with these Adepts. Yet, at the same time, they carry their separate responsibilities and individualities. The Situation looks like a State of diversities within the Universal Unity of creative consciousness. Ahir Budhanya as a Rudra guided the egos in spiritualizing themselves, becoming aware of their inherent divinity, and led them to the class of active functionaries among the Nature's finer forces.

The two asterisms of Bhadrpadās stand at the threshold of the source of final beatitude and the eternal rest of the Manvantaric Interregnum, namely, the Deluge, before entering into the next cycle of evolutionary impulses. These two asterisms carefully protect and prepare the pilgrims so that there is no "fall of the Angels". It is for this reason that Ajaikapada and Ahir Budhanya are invoked. If the

divine beneficence could pour their benediction on the pilgrims and the superconscient could descend on them, then these could save them from toppling over the high sea. The seers invoked them so that they could direct the *Devagopas*, the Lord's Mighty Angels to help them to perceive the light they sought, and attain the power that maketh all things new. Through their help the seers hoped to have their veils over spiritual perception removed. All of them are engaged in discharging their spiritual duties still under a higher order of spiritual powers; the egos evolving under them now become the epitome of sensitivity, openness, and universality in their nature. With complete realization of their indwelling spirit, they now move to the next stage of self-fulfillment under Revati where they attain their well earned rest.

REVATI

(346° 40'-360° 00')

At Revati, the divine spark enters the realm of peace and tranquility. The influence of Revati is so powerful that all efforts to conceptualize it prove futile. Described as the infinite Stretch of waters, which contain within it all the souls which have concluded their Manavantaric journey and have ceased to have any separate existence, refers only to a tiny portion of this stupendous realm. This is the realm of everlasting bliss described in Buddhist literature as the region of *Sukhavati*. Lord Buddha mentioned that "Myriads of Spirits (Lhas) resort there for rest and the return to their regions (Those who have not ended their earth rings). Again, O Sariputra, in that land of joy many who are born in it are Avaivartyas (= those who will never return, the seventh round men etc.)¹.

Representing the culmination of Sattwic impulsion, Revati contains within it all the potential and possibilities for providing the ultimate perfection of every quality. The various features of this asterism as mentioned in astrological texts do not provide much clue to the understanding of its essential nature. The ancient seers invoked Revati and Ashwinis together for the bestowal of the benediction of Bhaga which signified happiness, final beatitude as well as indifference to worldly objects but they did not elaborate their functions separately*. They described the five asterisms extending from Revati to Rohini as subjective ones which prepared the egos for their manifestative journey and gradually provided them the necessary wherewithals with which the objectified egos could face their trials and tribulations of the path and attain the necessary experiences and understanding. But the link between the acme of Sattwic Impulsion and the initial phase of Rajasic movement remained veiled in deep mysteries. Often the subjectivity and latency during Revati is stated to be accompanied by intense activity in the inner nature of the dormant entity. The Great Deep where the evolutionary movement culminates is often called Chaos which besides 'infinite space' also means 'complete confusion'. The use of these (1)

The Mahatma Letters, op. cit., p. 100

(*) For fuller description of Bhaga, see Uttara Phalguni, the 12th asterism; he pre-sided over this asterism. Furthermore, Bhaga also means the female generative organ, pudendum muliebre, which symbolized Bharani, the 2nd asterism.

words in relation with Revati is meaningful even to indicate the contra-dictory nature of its impulses: the complete cessation of all agitation, all activity and extremely heightened sensitivity accompanied with highly significant 'inner' activity at the core of the nucleus almost seems *abracadabra* but the understanding of this contradiction reveals the basic nature of the asterism.

The various scriptural stories indicated some of the esoteric characteristics of the impulse. Shrimad Bhagwad Purana spoke of the birth and marriage of Revati. Revati was a grandchild of Raivata who was himself the great grandson of Manu, an offspring of Sun. Raivata fathered hundred children of whom the eldest one was a son named Kakudmi (= a mountain peak, a bull with a hump on its Shoulder). He founded a kingdom under the sea. It was named Kushasthali (meaning the land of the grass called Kusha, which is considered very holi and formed an essential requisite in several religious ceremonies). Revati was one of his daughters. She was supernally beautiful. It was difficult to find a suitable match for her. So Raivata went to Brahma, the Creator of the universe, to seek his guidance in the matter. On reaching the palace of Brahma, he found the Lord engaged otherwise. So he waited till he got an appointment with the Lord. On meeting Brahma, Raivata was told that much time had elapsed since his departure from the human world. During the interregnum significant changes have occurred, none of his contemporaries or even their descendants would be traceable when Raivata

would return. So Raivata was advised to wait on his return for the avatara (incarnation, descent) of Lord Vishnu in the form of Krishna whose elder brother Balarama would also be there. He would be a partial manifestation of the Lord himself. Brahma advised Raivata to offer Revati in marriage to Balarama. Raivata returned and began to devote himself to prayers and austerities. When Balarama was born, Raivata approached him to accept Revati in marriage. Balarama found Revati "too big" for that period of time (yuga) so he touched her with his plough (which he carried as his weapon to get his decisions implemented) and thereby made her of the human size and married her.

This allegorical story suggests that Revati in her pristine nature was perpetual and infinite but for creative purpose and to be useful in the manifestative process she had to be reduced to size that is, her divinity had to be veiled several times. Revati assumed limitations on her primordial powers in order to discharge her role as feminine generatrix, a creative Channel. Rohini, the fourth asterism is mythologically represented as the mother of Balarama who mystically preserved the foetus taken from the womb of Devaki, his real (biological) mother, till parturition so as to save him from the wrath of Kansa who was determined to destroy every child of the Lord's mother. In this story Revati provided the creative support for the Lord's manifestation; she provided the vehicle through which divinity could fructify and carry forth its plan.

The transformation from subjectivity to objectivity, the swelling of the inner to the periphery, becomes possible only with the intercession of Revati although the final fructification was possible under Rohini. The zone of asterisms extending from Revati to Rohini represents the realm of subjectivity where divine spirit is busy preparing the commencement of the objective manifestation. Revati's stay at *Brahma Loka* signified the duration of dormancy of the egos in the region of Bliss, Sukhavati in the Buddhist terminology, or in the realm of the Great Deep, the Sea of Immutability in the Hindu philosophy. Balarama's act of reducing the grand stature of Revati to physical dimensions (of the Fifth Root Race) refers to the immensity of the egoic consciousness which had to be restricted and veiled to make it adapted to the conditions of terrestrial journey. The non-material nature of the being which involves itself in the materialization process (beginning with Ashwinis) is stupendous which is caged, cabined and diminished in its scope to harmonize with its material casement.

Revati is symbolized by a fish. We have already dealt in detail the significance of fish in relation with Pisces. The symbol in relation with Revati referred to its role in preserving the seeds till their parturition. This aspect of the asterism is allegorized in Puranic stories in a very graphic manner. It is described there that a small fish appeared on the palm of Manu Rishi while he was engaged in offering libation of water to the Manes, the diseased ancestors. Taking pity on the fish, the Rishi put it in his water-pot but soon it became too big for it. It began agitating therein. The Rishi took it out and put it in a bigger vessel but a similar Situation arose again. Wherever the Rishi put the fish, it became oversize for it. When the Rishi realised that the fish in fact was the Lord Vishnu himself, the Lord, advised him to collect the Germs of various species, put them in a boat and * rescue them from devastation which was to follow soon. The Rishi was also advised to fasten the boat with a rope to the horn of the fish which would carry the boat to a safe place. It is mentioned that a serpent came floating to the Rishi at the beginning of the deluge and the Rishi tied the boat to the horn of the fish with this serpent and thus the Germs were transported to a safe resort. When the conditions became normal, the fish showed itself once again to be the Lord himself who thus resurrected the Vedas and the seeds for the fresh creative design.

This story in different forms is found in many scripture. Essentially the fish represented the savior. In relation with Revati it represented the stage where the 'myriads of spirits resort there for rest and then return to their own regions'. In that land of bliss many who are born in it are those who will never return. Some of the egos who reach this stage accomplish what is there to learn on this earth and need no more earthly experiences. They remain in the Sea of Immutability till the return of the next life-wave when they begin their pilgrimage once again but on a higher life-cycle. Meanwhile the rest of the egos incubate in this stage of dormancy till their turn for the next impulse arrives. This is the main feature of Revati implied by the fish symbol: it preserves, nourishes and transports the seeds to the safe resort for their further unfoldment at appropriate time.

Pushan is the Vedic deity presiding over Revati. He is an Aditya, Sun, born of Aditi the mother of all gods. These Adityas have special roles to play at different stages of manifestation. At Revati, the function of Pushan is to reawaken the slumbering egos and to put them on the path for their next Manvantaric journey. Pushan keeps watch over the egos slumbering in the Great Deep, reawakens

them, and guides them towards the new dawn. This responsibility is entrusted to Pushan in his role as the Lord of the Path. He is also the nourisher, the feeder of all beings. He is the mysterious force that nourishes the foetus of the unborn babies. When the Lunar Pitris evolved men, they were senseless and helpless till Pushan took their charge and fed them. Pushan kept vigil over the individuals when they lay in their eternal sleep in the womb of eternity and "pushed" them at appropriate time towards self-unfoldment and move towards the new dawn. Pushan is meticulous about his duties. The evolving beings are often represented as oxen or bulls (generative potential), cows (light and nourishment), and horses (vital energy); Pushan holds the luminous ox-goad in his hand (and this goad is called Ara and Astra and resembles the horn of a cow) with which he guides the evolving entities on their right course. Pushan is invoked as the one "who finds the shining king (the soul or the divine potential with all the powers of the Supreme Creator latent in him) who was hidden from us and concealed in the cave". The regency of Pushan over Revati emphasised this role of the deity. He is expected to protect, nourish, retrieve (reawaken) the sleeping souls and push them to the new path once again. The reference to the goad in the shape of the cow's horn relates Pushan with Rohini (who carried Balarama to safety till the appropriate time when he was out of danger, or was released from subjectivity and was able to play his special role to support the manifestation of the divinity, the universal indwelling spirit represented by Lord Krishna himself). Pushan is invoked as the power which dispelled ignorance and sustained the pilgrims on their path. The Vedic seers prayed to Pushan as follows: "Thou are powerful for every creation; thou becomest the increaser, O God, by this morning; and thou illumineest utterly all this world of becoming. The Darkened being is illumined by thy light". The pushing of the life-essence from the darkness of eternal slumber to the new manvantaric dawn is the main function of Revati in which process Pushan is said "to yoke to his car the forces of the unborn ones (Ram, the Aruies?)".

Mercury functioned as the planetary deity for Revati. In this task, Mercury operated primarily as a bridge. He acted as a bridge between material and spiritual aspects of one's personality. He acted as a bridge between matter and spirit, between lower quaternary and higher triad, between men and gods. Revati has the admirable feature of imparting all these qualities to the egos under its charge. Revati is often considered a female in astrological texts which implied passivity and receptivity of the Revati impulse. It also represents the feminine power to hold within it the seeds till parturition.

Revati shows in many ways the basic characteristics of that phase of manifestation wherein the life-essence lies dormant and in its eternal nature awaits another thrill of materialization, veiling of its pristine nature and commencement of egoic experiences. At Revati, the individualization ego merges in Paramatma, the universal soul and enters into the eternal Flame. The drop mingles into the sea, and the fish goes back to its habitat. During the Brahma's night of eternal sleep, the individual streams of consciousness enter into the perpetual motion which knows no end and which never ceases in its movement. But there is no agitation or any effort towards externalisation either. Revati represents the eternal quietitude of this perpetual motion. *The Book of Dzyan* described such a Situation in very philosophical terms yet pointing to various important characteristics of this impulse. It stated:

The eternal parent wrapped in her ever invisible robes had slumbered once again for seven eternities. Time was not, for it lay asleep in the infinite bosom of duration. Universal mind was not, for there were no Ah-hi to contain it. The seven ways to Miss were not. The Great Causes of misery were not, for there was no one to produce and get ensnared by them. Darkness alone filled the Boundless all, for Father, Mother and Son were once more one, and the Son had not awakened yet for the new wheel, and his pilgrimage thereon. The seven Sublime Lords and the seven Truths had ceased to be, and the Universe, the Son of Necessity, was immersed in Paranishpanna, to be out breathed by that which is and yet is not. Naught was. The causes of existence had been done away with; the visible that was, and the invisible that is, rested in eternal Non-Being, The One Being.

Darkness alone filled the whole realm of Revati, yet Revati contained within itself much illumination for providing to the evolving egos all that is needed for self-awareness and Divine Wisdom. The mighty Pushan is indeed very powerful to push all the dormant egos, when their time comes, towards a new beginning. When Revati ends, Ashwinis take charge and "the last Vibration of the Seven Eternity thrills through Infinitude. The Mother swells, expanding from within without like the Bud of the Lotus". When the mother swells, differentiation sets in, and a new Sun radiates a new dawn. There is commencement of phenomenalisation. But every activity is still in the Chaos, the Great Deep, the region of perfect quietitude and beatitude. The Germ is still unborn. The parturition has not yet taken place. The tail of the serpent is in its mouth; the eternal-weaver of illusory world of senses is encircled by the uroboros as the alchemists world describe it. It is the cessation of all actions which heralds the preparation for the new beginning. Revati marked the end of the egoic journey which also prepared it for its next reawakening.
